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Before the storm; a true  
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# BEFORE THE STORM

A true picture of life in Russia  
prior to the Communist  
Revolution of 1917.

by

**Baron C. Wrangell-Rokassowsky**



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I dedicate this story to my beloved mother

**BARONESS VERA ROKASSOWSKY**

whose memory I ever treasure.





*Baron Carl Wrangell-Rokassowsky, a Knight of Honour and Devotion of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta.*



*BORN*

~~Baron~~ in Yalta, Crimea, Russia, and educated in the Corps des Pages of His Majesty the Czar in St. Petersburg, Baron Carl Wrangell-Rokassowsky was commissioned a Lieutenant of the Baltic Cavalry Regiment with which he served for a short time at the front in World War I.

After the Russian Revolution he escaped from Russia and was for a time a member of the Inter-Allied Mission in Germany. Baron Wrangell-Rokassowsky came to the United States in 1924. His father, Stanislaw von Wrangell, was a landowner in the Province of Vitebsk and in the Crimea and was President of the Justices of the Peace in the District of Lutzin; his mother, the Baroness Vera Rokassowsky, was a daughter of a Russian General who was also Governor-General of Finland and under his supervision was accomplished all the preparatory work for the opening in 1863 of the first Finnish Parliament.

In his story « Before the Storm » Baron Wrangell-Rokassowsky gives a true picture of life in Russia prior to the Communist Revolution of 1917. He expresses the point of view of Russian landowners and gives a logical explanation of the causes which led to the Revolution and the consequent establishment of a Communist government in Russia, primarily an agricultural country.





# **BEFORE THE STORM**

by

Baron Carl Rokassowsky





## FOREWORD

« Before the Storm » is essentially the story of my father's life. My father was a landowner and a judge. I describe his dealings with peasants, who at that time represented nearly eighty per cent of the population of the Russian Empire. I describe their character and their peculiarities.

So far, the point of view of Russian landowners has remained practically unknown to American readers. Only a few writers have attempted to explain conclusively and logically the phenomenon of the establishment of a Communist Government in Russia, primarily an agricultural country.

In order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to know the basic facts of Russian history during the XIX century.

The Russian intelligentsia was very familiar with Communist doctrines. To the great delight of Karl Marx, the first translation made of « Das Kapital » was into the Russian language. In 1938, « Knizhaya Letopis », the official publication of the Soviet government, stated that 500,000 copies of Karl Marx's works had been sold in Czarist Russia between 1864 and 1914. In 1896, and in subsequent years, a course and seminar on socialism were offered at the University of Moscow, taught by the famous liberal economist A. Chuprov; the course and seminar were widely attended.

Karl Max was predicting the establishment of Communism in some highly industrialized country (he aimed at Germany), where the great majority of the population were wage-earning workers of industry — the so-called « proletariat ». If Marx were alive today, he would be amazed that

his ideas had found practical application in a country as agricultural as Russia had been.

The experience of this century in all European countries, and most recently in the Eastern European countries of Hungary, Poland and Romania (countries occupied by the Red Army, where Communism had been forced on the unfortunate population at the point of a bayonet) proves without doubt that the farmers of these countries stubbornly resisted Communist propaganda. They owned their land, and, therefore, had no use for Communist principles and ideas.

In the former Russian Empire about eighty per cent of the population were « mujiks », or peasant-farmers working the land. According to these figures, the Russian Empire should have been absolutely immune to any Communist propaganda. However, in 1917, contrary to all logic, millions of Russian farmers accepted Communism and have now been led for the past fifty years by the Communist government. To an outsider, the reasons why the Russian masses accepted Communism understandably remain obscure.

Studying the social conditions in the Russian Empire prior to the Communist Revolution of 1917, we come to the astounding revelation that Communism was established in Russia as early as 1861. To be exact, the Communist forms of ownership of the land for the masses of the Russian peasants were established in Russia subsequent to the Ukase of the Emperor Alexander II, the grandfather of the last Czar. This Ukase, or official act, dated February 19 / March 3, 1861, has been known in Russian history as the Act of Liberation of the Russian peasants.

Prior to the year 1861, Russian peasants were serfs, or slaves. The ownership of the serfs was a privilege of the nobility, and about fifty percent of the peasants were serfs privately owned by the nobles, and another fifty percent represented the property of the Crown.

According to the Ukase of Emperor Alexander II, all serfs, privately owned as well as owned by the Crown, became free at once, without any compensation being paid to their former masters. It is interesting to note that the Act of Liberation, although bringing tremendous social and economic changes, was not accompanied by a civil war. All

classes accepted peacefully the Manifesto of the Czar and obeyed his order.

The Act of Liberation also provided that these newly created free farmers would be given land. For this purpose, the government took land from the nobility and gave it to the serfs who had been privately owned. To the serfs belonging to the Crown, the fertile lands of the Crown were distributed.

In 1861, the peasants received enough land to satisfy their needs. According to the statistics of 1905, peasants in European Russia owned twice as much land as the nobles. In 1916, when the Czar was still at the head of the government, small-size rural holdings (peasant farms under 135 acres each, where the work of a family prevailed) occupied a total area of 448 million acres (71 percent), whereas the large estates, those over 135 acres, covered an area of only 184 million acres (29 percent). Excluding the forest areas, the small peasant ownership of land in the Russian Empire was 80.4 percent. Eighty-two percent of the cattle and eighty-six percent of the horses were owned by peasants.

Consequently, considering the size of Russia and the comparatively small population per square mile, there could not possibly have been a shortage of fertile land as was claimed by the Russian peasants. There should not have been any « peasant problem » in Czarist Russia, but this problem did exist, was very real, and was of paramount importance to the Empire, because it affected about eighty percent of the population. This « peasant problem » was caused by the fact that subsequent to the Act of Liberation of 1861, by the actual distribution of land to the freed peasants, the **Czarist government established for them a Communist form of ownership of their land.**

Every peasant village was made a commune, a self-governing unit by the Czarist government. The land was not given to an individual peasant, but to his commune. Therefore, a peasant had only a share in the landholdings of his commune. **This fact explains why Communist propaganda found a ready and willing response among the masses of the Russian people.**

The system of communes had not been introduced in 1861 to the whole of the Russian Empire. It did not exist in

Poland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. Therefore, in spite of the terrific impact of a Revolution and the highly publicized genius of Lenin, **these parts of the Empire stubbornly resisted Communism.** All these parts became independent republics with a real democratic government established in each one.

The system of communes was never introduced to the natives of the Russian Caucasus where Joseph Stalin was born, and the Georgians put up a stubborn fight against the Communists and the detachments of the Red Army. However, the Soviet Government troops outnumbered them, and in spite of their heroic resistance, the Caucasus was soon included in the Soviet Union. Stalin could not tolerate his native Georgia repudiating his leadership!

The system of communes never existed in Siberia, Turkestan, and other Asiatic possessions of the former Russian empire. However, the population in those remote areas was very sparse. In fact, the entire population of all Russian possessions in Asia amounted to only about ten percent of the population of European Russia. Consequently, these possessions could not offer any resistance to the Red Army of the Soviet Government.

In the act of establishing a system of communes in Russia, the Czarist Russian government was influenced by the followers of the Slavophil movement. The founders of this movement, mostly professors of Russian universities and particularly of Moscow University, were idealists who dug deep into the very foundations of Russian history and Russian national mind. They sought to discover the peculiar genius of Russian civilization in the prehistoric peasant communes, which, they said, revealed the «socialistic soul» of Russia as contrasted to the «individualistic soul» of Western Europe, and of the whole world as well. Their assumption that the system of communes which they had discovered in prehistoric Russia represented a characteristically Russian form **was wrong.** Quite to the contrary, **all primitive people,** at some early period of their history, lived in communes, and the Russian people were no exception to this rule. To primitive tribes, the communistic form of society is dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. Thus, it can be seen that the «discovery» by Russian Slavophiles of a «socialistic

soul » of the Russian people was pure nonsense. They could just as well have discovered a « socialistic soul » in American Indians or African Negroes.

**Communism** was not created by Karl Marx in the XIX century. This social form had been known to the human race from the very beginning of its early existence. All primitive people lived, and continue to live, in tribes or communes.

The first « Communists » were possibly some savages who lived on the bank of a river, or on the shore of a lake, and whose occupation was fishing. They all went out fishing together, and shared equally whatever they were able to catch. The nomad tribes whose occupation had been raising cattle had also been good « **Communists** ». Their cattle had always been the property of the whole tribe. Mongolian nomads in Central Asia, Negroes in Africa, American Indians who continue to live on reservations, and primitive Russian peasants as well were all familiar with Communist forms of life.

**Communism** is not a form of the future, but of the past.

If I succeed in delivering this important message to my American readers, my duty towards my countrymen of the New World will be fulfilled.

The Author.







BARON VON WRANGELL - ROKASSOWSKY



## THE REVOLT OF DECEMBRISTS

### CHAPTER I

I have no recollection of my father until he was almost sixty. My grandfather was born in 1787, my father in 1844, when my grandfather was fifty-seven years old. I was born in 1896, when my father was fifty-two. Due to these unusual circumstances, three generations were spread over a period of some one hundred eighty years.

My father, Stanislaw-Alexis von Wrangell-Huebenthal (1), was born at the time when Russian peasants were serfs of their noble masters or serfs of the Crown. The serfdom in Russia was abolished sixteen years later, in 1861. At the time of my father's childhood my grandfather, Carl-Philipp von Wrangell, lived in his own house in Vitebsk. My father's mother, Anna Juriewicz, was his second wife. His first wife, Constance Nassekin, had died in 1832, leaving him two sons. These two half-brothers of my father were some fifteen years older, and my father had to rise when either of them entered the room.

My father's upbringing was very strict. He had a German tutor who lived in the house and who supervised all his activities. Each day my father arose early, washed in

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(1) The family of author's mother, Rokassowsky, became extinct in male line, and the author was authorized to add to his father's family name, von Wrangell, the title and the family name of his maternal grandfather, Baron Rokassowsky, the late Governor-General of Finland.

Footnote of the author.

cold water (at that time no one even heard of central heating), dressed with great care, and arrived at the breakfast table on time. Meals were served by the old butler Stephan, who was my grandfather's serf, as were all the rest of his servants. At the table, my father was forbidden to talk, he was permitted only to answer questions addressed to him. He was supposed to sit straight in his chair, keeping the index fingers of both his hands on the table, and wait for food to be served to him. This same procedure was followed at all meals.

My father was required to eat whatever was served to him, without any show of preference. For some reason, he disliked boiled carrots. He often left them on his plate. From the other end of the long table, my grandfather would notice, and inquire of his youngest son, «Did you have enough to eat?» Without waiting for an answer, he ordered Stephan to remove the plate and put it away. When the next course was served, my father did not get anything. He would try to keep quiet, but eventually would timidly ask for dessert.

«You are not hungry, Stas, you did not eat your carrots. Why do you ask for a dessert?», my grandfather would answer, and little Stas would get no dessert.

If this incident occurred at a dinner, the following morning when everybody would be served breakfast, Stephan would place in front of my father the same plate of cold carrots that he had not eaten the day before. My father would then ask only for a cup of hot tea.

«Since you did not eat carrots, you are not hungry», my grandfather would answer, «and, therefore, you do not need any breakfast». And, that was that.

My father was quite stubborn and would go without breakfast, but he would get the same plate of carrots for lunch, and no other food would be served him until he would finally swallow the unfortunate carrots-.

Perhaps some parents of today would find this system of raising a child too cruel, but the fact was that my father learned to obey and never again refused any food served to him.

My grandfather owned an estate, «Korolewo», not far from the city of Vitebsk. There his serfs lived in the «kur-



*Carl Philipp von Wrangell of  
the House Huebenthal,  
grandfather of the author.*



naia izba », a single-room hut with a large central fireplace. The hut had no chimney, only a big square hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. In winter, when the temperature was far below the freezing point, the fire was kept burning continuously, filling the room with blinding smoke and coating the walls and ceiling with a thick layer of soot. The smoke hurt the eyes of all the inhabitants, especially the children, so that they would always have tears streaming down their cheeks.

The Russian mujiks had been accustomed to living this way for centuries, and in spite of the horrible conditions, they seemed perfectly contented.

In some popular magazine published during the reign of Czar Nicholas I (1825-1855), there appeared articles in which writers tried to prove the healing capacity of soot. According to those writers, soot was the best medicine for many diseases. If this sounds incredible, I would refer my readers to the writings of Nicholas Leskoff. This Russian writer is not very well known abroad, but his descriptions of life in Russia in the XIX century are exceedingly interesting and most accurate.

Since my grandfather Wrangell was a cultured German, he could not understand how any human beings, even serfs, could live in such huts. With Germanic thoroughness, he decided to make a drawing of a model « izba » he intended to build for every family of his serfs, and he entrusted this task to my father, at that time a boy of only eight or nine years. Under the supervision of his German tutor, my father made a drawing of a house with a couple of rooms, a fireplace and a chimney in the middle. He made additional drawings showing stables for horses and cows, a chicken house, a hog house, etc. All of the houses, with small flower gardens in front of them, were supposed to face the main street of the new village, and each was to have a back yard for the stables, etc.

My father worked diligently on the drawings for several winter months. Finally, all the drawings were ready, and my grandfather passed them on to the superintendent of his estate with orders to build a new village at once.

There was plenty of lumber on the estate, and the Russian peasants knew how to make bricks and bake them in



an oven. There was no problem in getting the necessary materials, and my grandfather's serfs were soon hard at work. As soon as construction was completed, my grandfather gave orders to his serfs to move with their families into the new dwellings. Knowing the character of the Russian peasants, he did not forget to give orders to burn their old homes.

A couple of weeks later, he went to see for himself how everyone liked his new quarters. Riding in an open carriage with my father sitting proudly at his side, they rode through the village street. Suddenly my grandfather was appalled by a strong odor. It did not take him long to discover that his serfs were living in the stables, and not in the houses. In those stables they had built fireplaces and made holes in the roofs, similar to their old huts. Having no use for the new houses, they had turned them into privies. The odor was so strong that it was sickening to drive through the village street.

My grandfather was outraged and immediately called all the serfs to a meeting. He asked them to explain their actions. The peasant bowed respectfully, and replied, «Our fathers and our grandfathers lived that way, and we shall continue to live the same way».

My grandfather was furious and was ready to give orders to have everyone whipped, but their resistance to changed living conditions was so strong that he gave up in disgust and ordered his coachman to drive back to the city.

\* \* \*

My grandfather, Carl-Philipp von Wrangell-Huebenthal, was born in Germany, and studied medicine in the Universities of Marburg and Goettingen. This was at the time of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon, when Germany was divided into some forty kingdoms and principalities. The southwestern German states, along with Bavaria which had received from Napoleon the status of a kingdom, formed the so-called «Union of the Rhine», an organization which was willing to support this new master of Europe, while the northeastern states, notably Prussia, were decidedly against Napoleon and sided with the Holy Empire and Russia in their struggle to free Europe from this upstart.

In 1806, under pressure from Napoleon, Emperor Francis II was forced to give up his title of Emperor of the Holy Empire and assume the title of Emperor of Austria. Two years previously, Napoleon was crowned by Pope Pius VII Emperor of France in an attempt to establish himself as a direct heir to Charlemagne who had been crowned by Pope Leo III in 800 A.D. At that time, the title of Emperor was practically forced on Charlemagne by the Pope, who was trying to reinstate the Roman Empire in order to maintain peace - **PAX ROMANUM**.

Exactly one thousand and six years later, in his efforts to subdue all of Western Europe, the new Emperor won a series of brilliant victories at Austerlitz, Yena, Eylau, Friedland, and Wagram....

In this eventful era, my grandfather Wrangell entered the services of the Russian Czar, joining the Russian Army in East Prussia. The defeat of the Russian and Prussian troops at Eylau and Friedland was followed by the peace treaty of Tilsit. For a few years, peace was restored between these two Empires, French in the West and Russian in the East, but my grandfather remained with the Russian Army, and in a few years was appointed the Head Doctor of an Army Division.

After the battle of Borodino and the subsequent retreat of Napoleon from Moscow, my grandfather retired from the Army and became the head of the Medical Administration of the Province of Vitebsk. He served under Prince Alexander of Wurttemberg, an uncle of Czar Alexander I, and one-time Governor-General of Belorussia (White Russia). The prince knew my grandfather very well, liked him, and gave him many valuable presents.

The revolt of «Decembrists» broke out in 1825, at the time of ascension to the throne of Czar Nicholas I.

After the defeat of Napoleon and the occupation of Paris in 1814 by Russian troops, many Russian aristocrats visited France. The liberal ideas of the French Revolution appealed to many of them and resulted in the formation of two secret Masonic lodges, «The Northern Star», and «The Southern Star». Both lodges enlisted as members many influential and wealthy Russian nobles.

In 1825, Czar Alexander I died childless, leaving his two brothers, Constantin and Nicholas, in line for the throne. The elder, Grand Duke Constantin, had in 1820 made a morganatic marriage to Mademoiselle Joanna Grudzinska of an old Polish noble family. She later received the title of Princess Lowicz. In 1823, Constantin signed secretly an abdication from the throne. His abdication was kept in a sealed envelope in Uspensky Cathedral in Moscow, and a copy of it in the Russian Senate in St. Petersburg, with instructions to be opened and read at the moment of the death of the Czar. Alexander accepted the renunciation of his brother and transferred the right of succession to his brother Nicholas, but the renunciation of Constantin was kept so secret that even the new Heir-Apparent, Grand Duke Nicholas, was completely unaware of it.

No telegraph, no railroads existed at that time. The government orders were dispatched by special couriers travelling by horses at full speed, day and night.

The Czar Alexander died in Taganrog, on the shores of Asof Sea, in South Russia. When the news of the death of the Czar reached St. Petersburg, the Grand Duke Nicholas, together with all the troops of St. Petersburg garrison, took an oath of allegiance to Constantin, while Constantin, who was at that time the Viceroy of Poland, swore allegiance in Warsaw to Nicholas. It appeared that, at that moment, there were two Emperors of Russia, each one of them expecting the other to ascend the throne.

The secret Masonic society of «The Northern Star» took advantage of the confusion caused by the secret abdication of Constantin to further its own ideals. Officers of the regiment of the guards stationed in St. Petersburg, members of this society, persuaded some soldiers that Nicholas was an usurper of the throne, and that it was their duty to defend the rights of the legitimate heir, Czar Constantin, and when the Grand Duke Nicholas finally agreed to become the Czar, the soldiers of the two regiments of the guards were led by their officers to the Senate Square. This revolt took place on the 14th of December, 1825, and became known as the «Revolt of Decembrists».

At first the new Emperor Nicholas I tried to win over the regiments which revolted, by using persuasion. When

the words of the higher clergy failed to move them, he sent Count Miloradovitch, Governor-General of St. Petersburg and a hero of the Campaign of 1812, to make an appeal to the soldiers to return peacefully to their barracks. While Count Miloradovitch was talking to the crowd, someone fired a shot and killed him. Only then did the Czar decided to resort to harsher methods. Units of cavalry and artillery were ordered to disperse the mob, and the revolt was suppressed.

Shortly thereafter, however, the Czar was informed that a big mob had gathered on the Senaia Square, protesting violently his ascension to the throne. The Czar ordered immediately his sled with two prancing horses, covered with a net, to be brought to the entrance of the palace. He ordered his coachman to drive him to Senaia Square.

The sled of the Czar, who was sitting behind his coachman, was driven into the middle of the crowd. The people were stunned. They never expected to see the Czar, without any guards, in their midst.

The coachman stopped the horses. The Czar stood up. He was six feet, nine inches tall, and very handsome. He looked at the mob around him, and ardered, « On your knees you, sons of bitches! » The crowd knelt. Further bloodshed was avoided, and it was the end of the revolt.

Meanwhile, « The Southern Star » tried to organize an uprising in Kiev, but this revolt failed, and order was restored.

As strange as it may seem, the members of these secret Masonic societies were planning the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of a republic in Russia, and yet, none of them had set his own serfs free. They all remained slave owners!

By the time of the ascension to the throne of Czar Nicholas I, the reputation of my grandfather as a medical doctor and diagnostician was already well established. In 1831, an epidemic of Asiatic cholera broke out with unprecedented violence in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other provinces. The scourge, having swept through Russia, spread into Germany and France. In England, epidemics of cholera

made their periodical appearances; the germs were brought by ships into the ports of the British Isles. In 1831, three thousand deaths were reported in London alone.

The epidemic was especially violent in Moscow where people became desperate. At the most critical moment, when deaths were recorded daily by many hundreds, the Czar suddenly appeared in Moscow! He appeared openly on the streets and in the public places of this ancient Russian capital, and his presence gave new courage to the unfortunate population. At the same time, doctors and all available medical personnel were ordered to the stricken areas.

My grandfather took an active part in fighting this epidemic. He worked in the hospitals himself and directed other doctors who were under him, to apply his own methods of fighting this disease.

On the sixth of December that year, the name's day of the Czar, when the epidemic subsided, church services were held throughout Russia, and the courage of the Russian Sovereign was highly praised. On that day, my grandfather received a citation from the Czar for saving forty thousand people from this horrible disease. He also received from the Czar a gold snuff-tobacco box with the initials of the Emperor inlaid in small diamonds. The citation and the present from the Czar were duly registered in his service record.

During the entire XIX century, epidemics of cholera broke out periodically in all parts of European Russia, and the mortality rate was appalling. My grandfather wrote an essay in German on the treatment of cholera and it was published in Russia in 1836. Many years later his methods were adopted by the Medical Administration of St. Petersburg and other districts.

At the time of my father's childhood, whenever an epidemic of cholera broke out in the Province of Vitebsk, the children of my grandfather and all the members of the household, contrary to the generally accepted rules and regulations, were permitted to eat raw fruits and vegetables.

One day a Jewish woman in the spasms of cholera fell down on a street near my grandfather's house. She was carried into the house and my grandfather treated her personally.

The faith of the Jewish population of the city of Vitebsk in my grandfather as a medical doctor was unshakable. They admired him greatly because he never refused to help anyone, even the poorest of them. He was sincerely dedicated to his profession as a physician.

Years after my grandfather's death, my father, on one of his frequent visits to Vitebsk, met a Jew by the name of Yossel who told him a remarkable story.

It happened about 1854 or 1855. Yossel, at that time just a boy, became ill — he had terrible headaches which steadily increased in their intensity. Yossel's parents were very poor, and became desperate, not knowing how to help their only child. Finally, Yossel's father went to see my grandfather who, as it was generally known in Vitebsk, was resting after having had a stroke. He had lost his speech, and his right side was completely paralyzed.

Yossel's father was refused admittance, and was told again and again that the doctor could not see anyone, but the poor Jew was very persistent, and after many hours was permitted to enter the room where my grandfather was sitting in a wheelchair. He was ordered to tell his story to the doctor.

With the characteristic gestures of his race, and with many facial contortions, the Jew finally succeeded in revealing the purpose of his visit. My grandfather listened attentively. Then an attendant gave him a piece of paper and a pencil, and he scribbled with great difficulty, using his left hand: « Hot steambath and twenty-five cups of hot tea ». This message was given to the Jew who, bowing and thanking profusely, finally left.

It never occurred to the poor Jew to doubt the wisdom of the doctor's advice. He immediately rented a small Russian bathhouse. On account of a fire hazard, all bathhouses in Russia were usually located in separate small buildings, either on the outskirts of a city or in some far corner of a courtyard, far apart from other buildings.

Yossel's parents proceeded to heat the steambath to the capacity, bringing their sick son to it. At the same time, they boiled a big samovar of water and forced Yossel to drink very hot tea, cup after cup.

After the fifteenth cup, blood, heavily mixed with pus, suddenly began to run out of the child's nostrils and ears. The poor boy had an abscess on his brain, and the heat forced the abscess to burst open. In those days, an operation of opening the skull was considered impossible, and all attempts resulted in the instant death of the unfortunate patients. These operations had been performed successfully in ancient Egypt long before our era, and in Europe only at the beginning of the XX century.

# BERSZADA

## CHAPTER II

My grandfather's second wife was Anna Juriewicz.

The Juriewicz family was one of the princely families of Poland. Centuries ago, the Juriewiczzes were Sovereign Princes of Lithuanian extraction and had common ancestors with the Radziwills.

After the marriage of Jagello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, to the Polish Queen Jadwiga in 1386, Lithuania and Poland became united, and a new dynasty of Jagellons replaced the old dynasty of Piasts on the throne of Poland.

Lithuania had at that time a strong aristocracy. After the marriage of their prince to the Polish queen, quite a number of them intermarried with the most prominent Polish noble families. Due to the fact that Poland was already Roman Catholic and much more civilized than pagan Lithuania, Lithuanian nobles became thoroughly « Polonized », accepted Christianity as well as the Polish language and culture. The Lithuanian language, a pure Sanskrit, was practically forgotten and exists to the present day only among Lithuanian peasants.

With the death of the King Sygmunt-August I in 1572, the Jagellons became extinct, and the office of the king became elective. As a matter of fact, from that time on, Poland was called officially « Rzeczpospolita », which means in Polish a republic, with a King elected for life.

Poland was an aristocratic republic because only the nobles had a right to vote. The nobles elected the king and all the members of the Polish Parliament (Seim). Actually,



Poland was ruled by a couple of dozen magnates, the most powerful Polish princes who were independent sovereigns in their own domains. Sometimes these magnates maintained their own private armies, and the lesser nobility (Szlachta) used to serve as officers in their armies. A well-known Polish writer, Henry Sienkiewicz, in his novel «Potop» (Deluge) described a war between Prince Radziwill and the King of Poland, in which the magnate was finally defeated.

It was difficult for the powerful magnates to come to an understanding and agree on the election of a certain candidate. Everyone of them had his own candidate for King when the throne was vacant. Therefore, they usually ended up electing some foreign prince.

The first elected King of Poland was a French Prince, Henri de Valois, who later became King Henri III of France. King Jan Sobieski followed. Sobieski won a brilliant victory over the Turks, and gave Poland a respected place among other European nations. Later on, it became customary for the Polish nobles to elect the Kings of Saxony to the throne of Poland, but in spite of election of a foreign King, who was a sovereign of both countries, the King never exercised sufficient authority in Poland, and the situation deteriorated very rapidly.

The Polish nobles, striving for more and more privileges and independence, promulgated a law which authorized any single member of the Parliament to exercise the right of an absolute veto. Any member of the Seim could rise and proclaim, «Nie pozwalam!» which meant, in Polish, «I do not permit!» and the proposed legislative measure was killed right then and there. As a result of this procedure, the government was unable to pass any new constructive legislation; there was always someone who was opposed to a measure, and the country became demoralized.

Poland's strong neighbors eyed with suspicion the government of the republic. Catherine the Great of Russia made an attempt to preserve the integrity of Poland by keeping the entire country under Russian influence. She succeeded in effecting the election to the throne of Poland Stanislaw Poniatowski, at one time her favorite. However, Poland's neighbors in the West, Maria-Theresa of Austria and particularly Frederic the Great of Prussia, forced a partition of

Poland between these countries. There were three partitions of Poland; the last one took place in 1793, and the Rzeczpospolita ceased to exist as an independent country.

« Kniaz » (Prince) Jacob Juriewicz supported the election of Stanislaw Poniatowski — in other words, the Juriewiczzes were of pro-Russian orientation — but by the end of the XVIII century, they had already lost the greater part of their estates. Practically nothing was left of the old glory and for several generations they did not use their princely title.

Stanislaw Juriewicz, a brother of my grandmother, served in the Hussar Regiment of Mariopol, and as a young officer took part in the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829. He won several decorations for bravery, and after the war, as a commander of a cavalry squadron, was stationed on the southern border of the Province of Wolyn.

In 1830, a series of revolutions broke out in different countries of Europe. King Charles X of France was forced to abdicate, and the throne passed to the Orleans branch of the Bourbon family. This was followed by revolutions in Belgium and Poland, each country striving to win its independence.

Stanislaw Juriewicz was sent with his squadron to Berszada, the estate of Pani (Lady) Joanna Moszynska, in the Province of Podolia, there to maintain law and order. The proud lady refused to receive a Russian Rittmeister, so Stanislaw Juriewicz was quartered in the house of the superintendent of the estate.

After staying there for a couple of weeks, Juriewicz received an order to return to Wolyn. At the head of his squadron, in his Hussar uniform, he rode on a prancing horse out of Berszada, when unexpectedly he met the open carriage of Lady Joanna. He saluted Lady Joanna, who was gracious enough to acknowledge his greeting.

It might have been the end, but fate had its own plans. Juriewicz received from his superior officer an order to return to Berszada. This time he was conducted to an apartment in the main house of the estate, and a liveried steward informed the handsome Hussar that Lady Joanna expected him for dinner.

Lady Joanna Moszynska was a widow. Her husband, Piotr Moszynski, died leaving his young and attractive wife and a small daughter by the name of Maria with a big fortune. His two family estates, Berszada and Nestoyda, after the abolition of slavery in Russia in 1861, and after a greater part of the land was given to the peasants, each comprised about thirty thousand hectares, or seventy-five thousand acres. This fortune of some one hundred fifty thousand acres of fertile black soil in South Russia actually represented a small principality, and amounted to many millions of gold roubles.

It did not take long for the handsome Hussar and the wealthy lady to fall in love with each other. They were married in a quiet ceremony, and soon afterward Stanislaw Juriewicz retired from the Army.

The big white stone house of Berszada, with its two-story high white columns at the main entrance, resembled the White House of Washington, D.C (Many houses on the estates of the Russian and Polish nobles were built in a style very similar to the Colonial style of this country).

The Berszada house was actually a palace. From the big entrance hall there were doors leading into several living rooms, large and small. Each room had its own name, « Blue Room », « Yellow Room », « Louis XV Room », and others, and finally, a large diningroom with a marble floor, and a balcony for musicians. This diningroom could seat some two hundred guests. There was also a library, a billiard room, a card room, a den, a gymnasium and an armory with carbines and rifles used for shooting wolves and bears; also English double-barrel guns for partridges and other birds, and a collection of pistols, sabers and rapiers for dueling and fencing. At one wing of the house there was a large ballroom with mirrors and candelabras on the walls.

On the second floor there were several master bedrooms, baths, and dressing rooms, and more intimate livingrooms and boudoirs.

The furniture in all the rooms was solid and in good taste; some of the furniture consisted of museum pieces. There were expensive draperies on the windows, oil paintings, Gobelins and tapestries on the walls. Heavy Persian rugs

covered the parquet floors. Bronze and porcelain of old Sèvres and Saxon stood on the table and mantelpieces, and bric-a-brac and objets d'art filled the glass cases and cupboards. It was evident that all this had been collected by many generations and brought here from the four corners of the globe.

Not far from the main house stood a large guesthouse built in the same style to accommodate the overflow of guests.

Innumerable well-trained, liveried servants were at all times ready to serve their masters and the guests.

In the stables of Berszada there were several hundred thoroughbred and Arabian horses with a corresponding number of saddles and carriages of all descriptions for all possible occasions, and an army of coachmen, equerries, grooms, and stable boys.

Another army of dog trainers, perforce hunters, piqueurs and keepers of the hounds took care of the kennels which housed pointers, Irish and English setters, and beagles for perforce hunting. There were separate kennels for the Russian wolfhounds.

When Lady Joanna entertained a couple of hundred guests, each guest, according to his own fancy, was provided with either a saddle horse or a carriage for an afternoon drive through the old park of Berszada with its many rare trees, small artificial lakes, bridges, marble statues and pavilions. This park occupied several hundred acres on the other side of the main house.

If the guests of Lady Joanna were attending a hunt with Russian wolfhounds, each guest was provided with a very fast horse and a couple of savage hounds (two hounds in Russian were called « Svoja ») on a string, one end of which was attached to the saddle and the other held in the hunter's hand. When a wolf suddenly appeared in front of the hunters, they had only to drop the end of the strings they were holding, and the rings on the collars of the hounds slid off the string. A wild race at the full speed of the horses followed. Horses were racing after the dogs, the dogs pursued the wolf... until the hounds finally caught up with their prey. This sport was, of course, reserved only for the men.

The hunt was followed by a lavish banquet with all

kinds of vodkas, Polish « starka », rare wines and French champagne brought up from the cellars of Berszada's house.

After dinner, parties of piquet and bèsigue were organized in the cardroom for the elderly guests. Some men played carambole in the billiard room, while the younger generation danced Viennese waltzes, Krakowiak and Mazurkas, accompanied by the soft music of a band of musicians. There were no mechanical devices to provide music at that time.

Late at night a supper was served. In large Polish and Russian households, there were usually several shifts of servants, and the guests could have their supper at a very late hour. This kind of entertainment often went on for days, sometimes even for weeks! Only an Oriental potentate, or a very prominent European prince could afford to entertain so lavishly. In Berszada, the Oriental luxury was combined with the most modern European comfort.

Stanislaw Juriewicz was mostly occupied with managing the estates of his wife — Berszada as well as Nestoyda, which was also in Podolia. They were about a hundred miles apart, and were divided into many ranches of several thousand acres each. There was a superintendent on each ranch, but the office of the general superintendent was in Berszada, not very far from the house which Lady Joanna occupied. There were all sorts of buildings — houses for workmen, stables for working horses and cattle, hog houses, poultry houses, granaries, barns for wagons and implements. As a matter of fact, it was a very busy place. These two estates produced hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat, so-called « Belotourka », the wheat of the highest quality. Podolia and the entire Ukraine was at that time the food-basket of the whole of Europe. Nobody had heard of Canadian or Argentine wheat. It was Russia that fed all of Western Europe and these estates required the constant attention and supervision of their owners.

Lady Joanna had no business sense, and the general superintendent of Berszada was entrusted with the overseeing of the estates and the sale of their produce.

Stanislaw Juriewicz had been born on the estate of his father in Belorussia and already in childhood had become familiar with the management of land. Lady Joanna

willingly entrusted to him her entire fortune, and he succeeded in considerably increasing production and income within a few years. He improved the system of rotation of the crops, and imported some thrashing machines from Austria (nowdays it is called Czechoslovakia). These machines represented possibly the first attempt to replace the ancient flails, and the peasants regarded them with suspicion.

He imported Arabian horses directly from Arabia, at that time a part of the Ottoman Empire. They were brought by boat to Odessa, a Russian port on the Black Sea. The horses arrived sewn up in chamois leather, with openings only for their mouths and eyes. This was a precaution — the sea air could affect these beautiful animals, accustomed to dry air of the desert. Herds of Arabian horses grazed in the immense pastures of Berszada.

In the winter, the Juriewiczes moved to their city house in Odessa. This house, built in early Renaissance style, with handwrought ceilings, mahogany doors with fancy bronze handles, inlaid parquet floors, exquisite furniture, oriental rugs, oil paintings by old masters, tapestries, and bronze and porcelain works, was one of the most luxurious mansions in this southern city.

Occasionally they took a trip to the French Riviera, travelling with a large retinue of servants, their own chef, valets and personal maids, secretaries, and nurses and tutors for the children. Travelling by railroad, they had their own private car. At a hotel, they usually occupied an entire floor. The French authorities had the greatest respect for this wealthy Russian prince and his princess. The French could not imagine that Stanislaw Juriewicz had no title. In their opinion, he was a prince travelling incognito.

The Juriewiczes did not particularly enjoy the Paris of Louis-Philippe, a citizen-King who, in his drive for popularity, often walked with a large umbrella on the streets of Paris among his subjects.

Paris in those days was not the city we know today. Monsieur Haussmann, a French-born German who became Prefect of the Seine, had not yet begun his enormous task of beautifying the French capital, enlarging streets, making immense squares, etc. This work was done some years later, at the time of the Second Empire.

The Juriewiczes liked Vienna and the Viennese Court of Emperor Ferdinand I. They had many intimate friends there, and their visits to this true capital of an Empire were always prolonged ones.

A couple of years after their marriage, a son was born to the young couple. He was named Mieczyslaw. Endless festivities followed the birth of an heir to the old name and vast fortune; but Maria, the step-daughter of Stanislaw Juriewicz, always remained his favorite.

In 1844, Stanislaw Juriewicz was elected Marshal of Nobility and was appointed Governor of the Province of Podolia. In the eyes of the Polish nobles of this Province, Stanislaw Juriewicz personified all the best traditions of their class — he was handsome, aristocratic-looking, noble, generous, and an excellent host — and they were proud of him! Czar Nicholas I knew him personally, and Juriewicz was careful to present his wife, Lady Joanna, to the Czar. The Russian Sovereign fully approved of his choice.

By the time Juriewicz was appointed Governor of Podolia, his son Mieczyslaw was twelve years old, and his step-daughter Maria had turned into a very attractive young debutante. She became engaged to Count Sygmunt Szembek, the owner of the estate Ustye in Podolia.

Count Szembek was a member of a well-known noble family in Poland, but, unfortunately, he was a gambler, and lost heavily at the card tables. Finally, his debts reached an alarming proportion; there was a danger that his family estate Ustye would be sold at auction. He was forced to turn to his future father-in-law for help.

It had always been difficult for the Russian and Polish landowners to raise ready cash, and in this case it was necessary to raise a half million gold Roubles, a tremendous sum at that time. Stanislaw Juriewicz and his wife were forced to sell their collection of uncut diamonds. These diamonds were sold in Amsterdam and London by my grandmother, Anna von Wrangell, a younger sister of Stanislaw Juriewicz. At the request of her brother, she made a special trip abroad, and for the time, Sygmunt Szembek was relieved from all of his debts. However, he continued to gamble, causing his young bride many sleepless nights. He was, careful,

though, to see to it that his losses did not exceed a certain limit.

A few years later, Stanislaw Juriewicz was destined to live through a great sorrow. Lady Joanna contracted an unknown sickness at the age of forty-five, and no doctors could save her. The sorrow of her husband was overwhelming.

Lady Joanna left her fortune in trust to her husband, after his death to be divided equally between her two children, her son Mieczyslaw Juriewicz and her daughter Countess Maria Szembek.

Stanislaw Juriewicz served with distinction as Governor of Podolia, and in 1853 was elected Marshal of Nobility of the Province of Vitebsk. He moved to the city of Vitebsk, the home of his sister, Anna von Wrangell.



## THE CRIMEAN WAR

### CHAPTER III

At the middle of the past century, dark, menacing clouds appeared on the horizon of the Russian Empire.

After the defeat of Napoleon and the subsequent Russian occupation of Paris, Russia played a predominant role on the European continent. At the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, at the wish of the Russian Czar, an international organization was established, for the first time in European history, uniting all European nations. This organization became known as «**The Holy Alliance**». The sole purpose of this organization was to maintain **peace**.

Napoleon had caused an upheaval marching with his victorious army from one end of Europe to another, from Spain and Portugal to Moscow — some fifteen years of continuous fighting. All European countries were tired of war, and the Czar, appearing as a great liberator of Western Europe, conceived the idea of an international alliance of all European powers based on the principles of Christianity; hence, this new organization received the name of «**The Holy Alliance**».

All European countries, with few exceptions, became members of this organization. The Pope of Rome, however, regarded himself as the representative of the Lord Himself, holding keys to the earthly kingdom as well as to the Kingdom of Heaven. He felt he was placed above all earthly rulers, and, therefore, refused to join the new alliance. The Ottoman Empire, being a Mohammedan country, was not invited to

join, although the Padischahs regarded favorably this new organization. Also, the British Parliament, being decidedly against any British definite commitments in affairs on the Continent, refused to approve the membership of the British Empire in the new plan. All the rest of the European nations joined the international alliance.

Napoleon, who had caused all the upheaval, was considered an upstart, the result of a revolution. Consequently, the newly created Alliance accepted a policy suppressing any revolt or revolution, and supporting the legitimate rulers who, it was presumed, being Christian kings, could always find a peaceful solution to their differences.

The actual power behind this structure was the Russian Czar, in the same way as nowadays the actual power behind the United Nations is the United States of America. The Czars followed the policy of helping to suppress any revolutionary movements.

When, in 1821, the Greeks started an uprising in an effort to win their independence from the Ottoman Empire, they could not succeed on account of the intervention of France, Great Britain, and Russia; these three European powers upheld the authority of the Sultans as their legitimate rulers.

In 1848, a series of revolutions took place in practically all European countries. It all started in Italy with a nationalist uprising against Austria. The movement extended to France, throughout all Austria, and to all German states. The only areas it did not touch were Russia, Spain, and Scandinavian countries. The general demand was for social reforms, such as universal suffrage, trade unions, etc. Karl Marx took advantage of this situation, and issued his well-known «Manifesto of the Communist Party». (1848). He was expecting a realization of the Communist doctrines in his lifetime. All these violent uprisings in different European countries were suppressed by force, and order was restored.

In France, on February 24th, the seventy-four year old King Louis-Philippe was forced to abdicate in favor of his ten-year old grandson, Philippe, Comte de Paris. His abdication did not, however, save the monarchy. The revolu-

tionaries ignored the claims of the young Philippe and established a republic (The Second Republic) instead.

In Austria-Hungary, Emperor Ferdinand granted freedom of the press and promised a constitution to Austria, but a violent uprising in Vienna forced the Imperial family to take refuge in the fortress-town of Olmutz, in Moravia.

Emperor Ferdinand had no children of his own, and the ambitious Archduchess Sophia, wife of the Emperor's younger brother, Franz-Karl, who had signed an abdication, persuaded the good-natured Emperor Ferdinand to abdicate in favor of her son, the Archduke Franz-Josef. However, Ferdinand, before his abdication, granted the Hungarians a very liberal constitution which the young Emperor Franz-Josef, after his coronation, refused to recognize. As a result, the Hungarian Diet refused to recognize Franz-Josef as King of Hungary. The eighteen-year old Franz-Josef invoked the Holy Alliance, and the Hungarian uprising was suppressed by the Russian troops. Czar Nicholas I did not hesitate to send Russian troops across the Carpathian Mountains into Hungary, and was acclaimed throughout Europe as a « Policeman of Europe » (*Gendarme d'Europe*). A wave of revolutions in all the German states was suppressed by force, and the Russian Czar emerged as a guardian of absolutism!

Soon, practically all European countries became tired of this guardianship, and the Holy Alliance, which had given Russia a predominant role in Europe, was denounced by the same members who only a decade before were anxious to uphold its principles. A new military alliance, directed against Russia, was formed by France, Great Britain, and Turkey. Austria-Hungary and the German states remained officially neutral, but hostile to Russia.

Russia was now facing an antagonistic Europe, not knowing for a long time where her enemies were going to strike. Late in the summer of 1853, the British fleet entered the White Sea in the north and started to bombard the Solovetzky Monastery, which, centuries before, had been built in the style of a medieval fortress on the Solovki Island in the middle of the White Sea. At the first shots from the British warships, huge swarms of seagulls, pelicans, and other northern birds rose like a big cloud. The swarms



CZAR NICHOLAS I (1825 - 1855)





of birds were so great that they darkened the skies, and the droppings of these birds on the British frigates forced them to retreat. Besides, the White Sea froze during some five winter months and was not suitable for military operations.

About ten months later, in 1854, the Allied Fleet entered the Black Sea in the south and bombarded Odessa, causing little damage to the city. Three bombs landed in a wall of Juriewicz's beautiful mansion without even exploding and ruining the wall. Juriewicz ordered his workmen to repair the cracks in the wall and to leave the bombs where they landed.

Finally the allies disembarked near Balaklava in Crimea and the siege of Sebastopol began...

Sebastopol, situated on the southern shore of the Crimean peninsula, was the most important Russian military port on the Black Sea. The entire Russian Black Sea fleet could very comfortably take refuge in the extensive natural harbor of this port. However, the Russian fleet was at that time much too small to accept a battle with the allied warships, and the Russian admirals ordered the sinking of their own frigates at the entrance of Sebastopol harbor in order to prevent the allied ships from entering it. The crews of the sunken ships were added to the small garrison of the fortress.

An eleven month seige followed. The cannons and rifles did not shoot at a great distance at that time, and the allies dug their trenches less than a hundred yards from the Russian fortifications. From time to time, both sides were attacking and counter-attacking, leaving dead and wounded in the narrow space between the lines of fortifications and the trenches. After the hand-fighting was over, both sides usually agreed on a short armistice, and while doctors, attendants and nurses were removing the dead and wounded, the officers were visiting each other. The allied officers invited the Russians, offering them English tea, French hors-d'oeuvres, and Scotch whiskey; during the next armistice, the Russians reciprocated by serving their enemies the best they had left in the besieged city, trying to impress them that no shortage of food and vodka was yet felt. When a short armistice was over, everybody was at his post, and the fighting was resumed.

Both sides displayed the attitude of professional soldiers, trained in the old traditions of Empires, with a strong sense of honor and respect for their enemies. The democratic idea of arousing savage hatred in the whole nation towards the enemy was not as yet practiced.

Russia always maintained a very large army, but Russian army units were stationed mostly in St. Petersburg and along the western Russian border. In the south, Russia did not keep a large contingent of troops. Without railroads and good, wide highways, it was impossible to move the necessary army units, cannons and supplies approximately a thousand miles across European Russia to Crimea. Possibly, it would have taken a year for reinforcements to arrive. Consequently, the Sebastopol garrison was left to its fate.

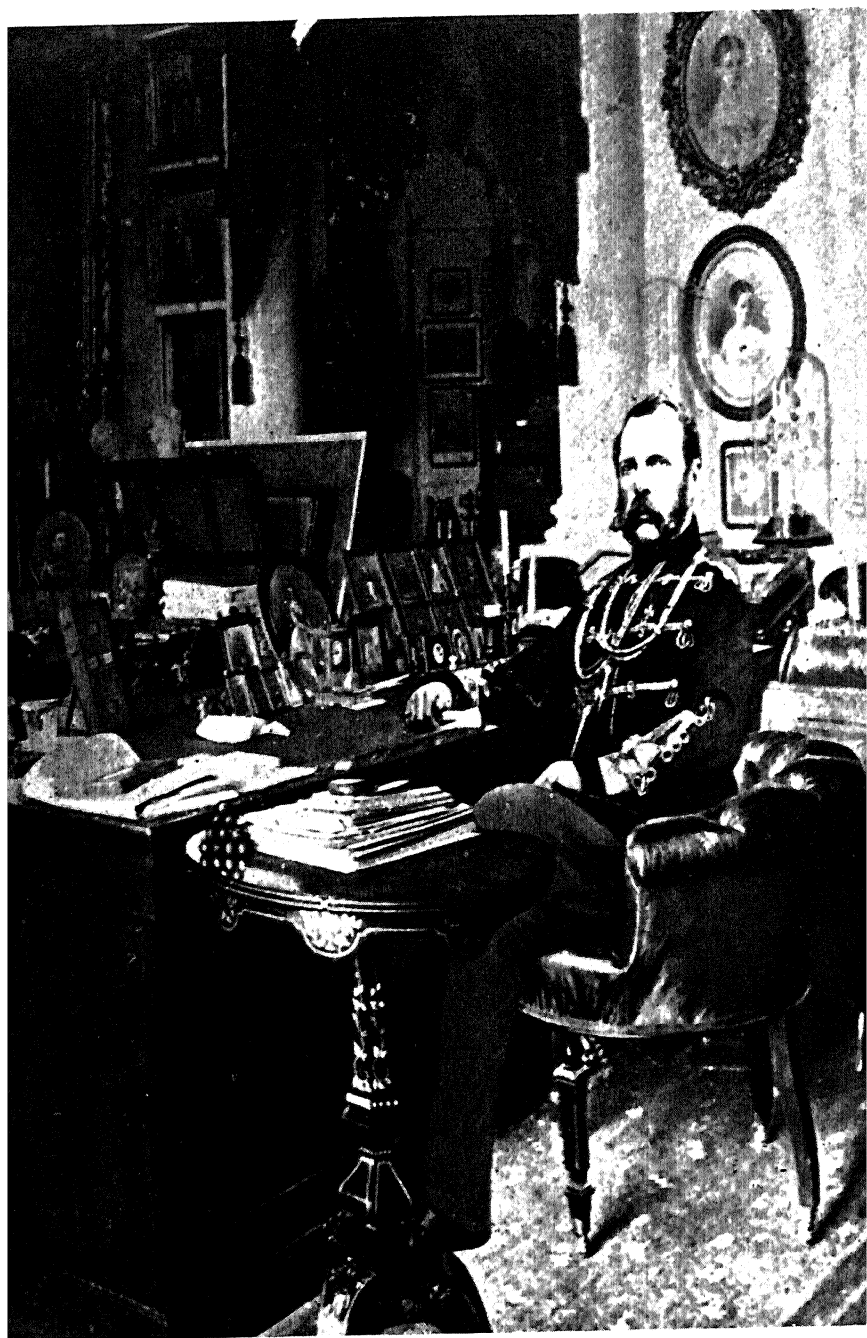
On the other hand, the capture of Sebastopol could not give a decisive victory to the allies. Russia, as a whole, did not even begin to feel the impact of war. And, at the same time, the intelligence service gave information to the allies that the Russian troops began to move towards Crimea. Slowly, but they were moving...

At this moment, Czar Nicholas I died, and his son, Czar Alexander II ascended the throne of Russia. The young Czar was exceedingly well-educated. His late father provided for him the best tutors, and young Alexander was full of new ideas. At the wish of Czar Nicholas I, several commissions had been working for many years on the question of liberation of the serfs, and the young Czar was anxious to introduce new reforms, abolishing slavery and corporal punishment, establishing courts by jury, and also many others. He was extremely good-hearted and liberal, and did not care to save the Holy Alliance or Russian prestige. The war was interfering with the realization of his dreams, and he agreed to a peace treaty which was enthusiastically accepted by the allies. Russia lost the Province of Bessarabia on the Romanian border and the right to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea. Peace was restored in Europe, but it was no longer guarded by any international organization. It was based on the balance of powers.

\* \* \*

Historically, and to some extent ethnologically, European





*Czar Alexander II Emancipator*



Russia was divided into several large sections, similar to the American division of New England, the South, Middle West, etc. In the center of European Russia was the « Great Russia » (Velikorossia), which included a dozen provinces around Moscow. To the southwest of Velikorossia was the « Little Russia » (Malorossia), or Ukraine, with the old city of Kiev. Directly south of Velikorossia was the territory along the northern shores of the Black Sea. This territory had been acquired only recently by Empress Catherine the Great (in the late 1700's) and was, therefore, called « New Russia » (Novorossia). Novorossia was flat, like a table, and extending to the horizon one could see the well-known Russian steppes, hot and dusty in the summer, and quite cold and covered by snow in the winter.

In the west, north of Ukraine, was « White Russia » (Belorussia) which consisted only of two provinces, Vitebsk and Mogilev. Belorussia was covered by vast forests which were intersected by swamps and large lakes. The northern part of Vitebsk was especially beautiful, and called « Livonian Swiss », with its lovely mirror-like lakes, and with hills, even though under frequently gloomy skies, covered with birch and pine forests.

In the second half of the XVI century, as a result of a war between Stephen Batory, King of Poland, and the Russian Czar Ivan the Terrible, Belorussia had become a Polish province and was returned to Russia only after the first partition of Poland in 1772.

The soil of Belorussia required hard labor to till it; the climate was damp and cold, with short, rainy summers; the local peasants, called « Belorussy », were rather sad-looking, and morose in character. Their language was a bad mixture of Polish and Russian.

In Russia, only about half of the peasants were privately owned serfs. The rest of the peasants were serfs of the Crown (Gosoudarstvennyie krestiane). At the time of the annexation of Belorussia, Empress Catherine the Great made a large number of the peasants that belonged to the Crown move from central Russia to the western border to the newly acquired provinces of Vitebsk and Mogilev, where they were settled on government land. These peasants, for some unknown

reason, were called «Panzyrnyie Boyare» (in English, «Armored Nobles»), and belonged to the religious sect of «Starovery» (Old. Faith). They were hard-working people and their religious belief made them abstain from alcoholic beverages and tobacco. The government gave them plenty of land, and they lived much better than the privately owned serfs. Living in Belorussia for several generations, they acquired gradually the same White Russian dialect, but were stronger in stature and looked healthier than the original serfs of that area.

Belorussia was also noted for its variety of religious factions. Ever since the time of the Polish King Kasimir the Great (1444-1492), there had been a great many Jews in Poland. Kasimir, who had a Jewish sweetheart by the name of Estherka, had invited the Jews to come to Poland after they had been expelled from Spain (1492). The Jews crowded into the cities and towns of Poland proper and into all Polish provinces, including Belorussia. Centuries before, however, the Order of Jesuits had been active among the Polish nobles who were the principal land owners in Belorussia. The Jesuit's influence was great, and there remained in Belorussia a number of Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches built by the Order.

Possibly because the Jesuit Order was so strong in Belorussia, Gabriel Gruber, General of this Order, took refuge there when, in 1773, Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Order. Gabriel Gruber, a well-educated man, settled in Polotsk, in the Province of Vitebsk, and lived there until 1796, when Emperor Paul I ascended the Russian throne.

Czar Paul I was a man easily influenced. He became interested in the Catholic Order of the Knights of Malta and was inspired by the idea of arranging a union between the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic (Russian Orthodox) churches. In the opinion of the Czar, this union would have been the best strong-hold against atheist ideas of the French Revolution, which were spreading at that time in Europe.

Gabriel Gruber moved to St. Petersburg, gained the confidence of the Czar and persuaded him to write a personal letter to the Pope asking him to restore the Jesuit Order. The Czar's request was granted, and Pope Pius VII restored

the Order of the Jesuits in March 1801, only a few days before the assassination of the Czar in Mikhailovsky Castle in St. Petersburg.

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On the banks of the Dvina River, the city of Vitebsk in Belorussia, like ancient Rome, was built on seven hills. In 1812, Vitebsk witnessed Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and was one of the first cities occupied by the Great Army. However, it was not burned and destroyed like some other Russian cities and towns.

The deep mud of the Russian roads, into which sank the French soldiers, their horses and cannons, the complete, wilful devastation, or «scorch the earth» policy adopted by the retreating Russians, the resulting starvation of men and animals, the frost and the terrible Russian cold which penetrated to the very marrow of the bones — a weapon which had long protected the «Holy Russia» against any invasion — all this did not harden the hearts of the invaders and Napoleon in Vitebsk was still in a generous mood and was still a benevolent «Master of Europe», who was ready to accept peace on his own terms. But nobody appealed to him for peace, and Vitebsk was soon witness to the retreat of the once Great Army that disintegrated into hordes of starving, dying men. For some years to come, here and there in the fields, one could find horses' carcasses, men's skeletons, rifles, pieces of uniforms, ammunition and even cannons.

Also, in that fateful year of 1812, these traces of destruction were duplicated across the ocean, in a far away country - the United States of America, when the Britishers burned down the White House in Washington, D.C. Getting ready to invade Russia and moving his armies across Western Europe to the Russian border, Napoleon wanted to protect his back from his arch enemy, Great Britain, and succeeded in involving His Majesty's government in a war across the Atlantic.

Forty years later, the city of Vitebsk was rebuilt and repaired, and there remained no traces of the past tragic events. Vitebsk, with the Gothic architecture of its Roman Catholic cathedrals, situated on the hills overlooking Dvina River, was an imposing and beautiful city. The main street

of Vitebsk was called «Zamkovaia oulitz» (The Castle street). There were stores, hotels, and restaurants there, and the noisy crowds on the streets, with their guttural sound of Yiddish and a stream of constant gesticulation, conveyed to one's memory the oriental cities of Jaffa and Haifa on the sunny Mediterranean.

At the most prominent place, on top of a hill, stood the mansion of the Governor, with an adjacent public garden where in the summer a military orchestra played, and the young Jewish girls flirted with their escorts.

Not far from the Governor's mansion stood the imposing building of the Assembly of Nobility, where a number of brilliant balls were arranged every year. In the same building was a club where gambling for very high stakes was going on at that time.

By the middle of the XIX century, slavery had become rather burdensome to the Russian and Polish nobles. After their extensive journeys through sophisticated Western Europe, they found they could no longer be satisfied with home-made linens, or a pair of heavy boots made by a serf shoemaker. However, soft French lingerie, suits of English materials, French perfumes and other luxuries required from the man outlay of cash which was rather difficult to get. The soil in Belorussia was unproductive, and the forest was the only real source of income, but the prices for lumber were low. Their serfs were lazy, slow-thinking and slow-moving. They represented rather a liability, because by law a noble landowner was obliged to take care of their welfare and pay taxes for them as well.

At that time there was a strong feeling that radical changes were impending. During the last decade before the liberation of the peasants, the government tried to protect the peasants. A number of government regulations and Imperial orders were issued to this effect. One of them forbade the exile of serfs to Siberia without a due process of law; another forbade separation of a serf's family, and the government began to look with disapproval upon the attempts of some noble slaveowners to set their serfs free without giving each man enough land to sustain his entire family.

The peasants were becoming restless; there were all sorts of wild rumors among them about the intentions of the

Czar. The position of the landowners did not appear as secure and impregnable as it had been for centuries in the past, and during this last decade before the abolition of slavery, gambling flourished among Russian and Polish aristocrats. Fortunes were made and lost overnight, and the borrowings from the Jewish lenders, who were always ready to accommodate, increased to proportions never reached before.

The election of Stanislaw Juriewicz to the office of Nobility Marshal, a position second only to the Governor's, was a subject of endless discussions long before his arrival in Vitebsk. The Juriewicz family still owned a number of estates in Belorussia and was registered in the books of Nobility of the province - two conditions necessary to making the election of Stanislaw Juriewicz possible.

Both of his parents, Joseph Juriewicz and his wife, Anna, born Deszpot-Zienowicz, lived all their lives in the Province of Vitebsk, and were well liked by the landed gentry. Stanislaw Juriewicz, being educated in the Jesuit College in Polotsk, was remembered as a good-looking, bright young man. Now, the Jews, through their own means of communication which was known as «Pantoufelnaiia Pochta» (in English, «Slippers' mail» - the orthodox Jews wore at that time a certain kind of slippers), supplied information about the great wealth, generosity, fine appearance, and other qualities of the newly elected Marshal, but their enthusiasm reached its height when immense fourgons laden with furniture and innumerable coffers, boxes, suitcases, and trunks, accompanied by an army of servants, began to arrive from the south. They foresaw much profit from this Heaven-sent rich customer!

Finally, the new Marshal of Nobility arrived in an enormous «dormeuse» (carriage on eight wheels), driven by twelve anglo-Arabian horses harnessed à la daumont, and proceeded to a house already prepared for him. Stanislaw Juriewicz, in the prime of his life, with his hair touched by silver, tall and handsome, talking in a clear, pleasant voice, made an impression which exceeded all expectations. Everybody, especially the women, found him charming, and some of the local beauties fell in love with him then and there.

## MARSHAL OF NOBILITY

### CHAPTER IV

Soon Stanislaw Juriewicz was busy in his new office. His duties as Nobility Marshal included presiding at the sessions of the Board which inducted new recruits into the army. In America it is called the Selective Service Board.

It was a responsible, and, in a certain way, grim duty, because at that time the new recruits were inducted into the army for as long as twenty-five years of service. It was like condemning a man to a lifelong punishment, because with his induction into the army, his life with his family, in most cases, was ended forever.

After twenty-five years of service, the parents of an inducted man were either dead, or were supported by their other sons. Brothers and sisters of a recruit were married, had their own families, and had divided among themselves whatever little property they had received from their parents. Therefore, a soldier released from the army after twenty-five years of service was usually unwelcome in his native village. Understandably, old soldiers preferred to stay in the army where their regiments and comrades-in-arms substituted as their families for them. A few of them served as state troopers (gendarmes), and city policeman, or uniformed doormen, their chests adorned with military decorations.

Traditionally, only sons were exempt from service, and the Board tried to induct only the boys of large families. However, the number of recruits to be called that year was increased on account of an approaching war.



Stanislaw Juriewicz tried to be impartial, inducting only young men from large families. He refused flatly to make any exception to this rule.

All recruits were to go through a medical examination and were supposed to meet certain rigid mental and physical requirements, but the final decision to induct the man was left entirely to the Nobility Marshal. If the Marshal inducted a young man contrary to a doctor's advice, and this young man was later found not to actually meet the necessary qualifications, the Nobility Marshal had to pay the Crown six hundred Roubles for each recruit so disqualified.

On the eve of the first session of the Board, Juriewicz was informed by some Jews that a few doctors were accepting graft from well-to-do peasants, promising them to find their sons unfit for service. A number of peasants who belonged to the Crown, the so-called « Panzynyie Boyare » could well afford to pay considerable sums in order to save their sons from a quarter of a century of service.

On the first day of the Board's session, the Governor of the Province arrived, and was greeted by Juriewicz, who did not offer the Governor his seat.

« Get a chair for his Excellency! », he ordered, and continued with his work.

After a medical examination, a young man, naked, approached a long table covered with green cloth, where sat the Marshal of Nobility. A doctor reported briefly to Juriewicz:

« Unfit for service! ».

Stanislaw Juriewicz saw a healthy, strong young fellow standing in front of him. According to the list of names, this boy was of the « Old Faith » and had three brothers.

« How do you feel? », Juriewicz asked him sternly.

The peasant boy was too honest to lie. « Fine », he answered.

« Turn about! » ordered Juriewicz. The young fellow turned awkwardly around.

« Induct him! » ordered Juriewicz.

The doctor who had examined the man looked astounded.

« I reported already to Your Excellency that this man is unfit for service », he said.

« And I have ordered him inducted ». Juriewicz said, and turned to the next man.

After Juriewicz inducted five or six young recruits despite the doctor's reports, the Governor signalled him that he wished to speak with him in private.

« How can you induct those fellows contrary to the doctor's reports? » the Governor asked Juriewicz when they were alone. « You will pay an enormous penalty! »

« I do not think that I will pay much », answered Juriewicz, « but, if I do, it will be worth it », and without giving any further explanation to the Governor, Juriewicz returned to his seat.

The Governor left and the work of the Board continued.

Later that night, the Jews reported to Juriewicz that the peasants had besieged the doctors, denouncing them and demanding their money back.

The next day the same story was repeated again, but there were fewer negative doctors' reports. The work of the Board continued for several weeks, and at the end, Stanislaw Juriewicz paid twenty-four hundred Roubles for four recruits. Juriewicz was very satisfied with his accomplishments and the whole city of Vitebsk was talking about nothing but the new Nobility Marshal!

After this stern business of inducting young men into the army was over, Stanislaw Juriewicz found time for the members of his own family.

At the time of his marriage to Lady Joanna, he had informed his brothers and his sister, Anna von Wrangell, who was seventeen years younger than he, that he had decided to give up in their favor his share in the landed estates of his father's family. The estates were in Belorussia, and after the death of his parents, Stanislaw Juriewicz, as the oldest brother, divided these properties among his brothers. His brother, Michal Juriewicz, received Kraszuty, a large estate covered by a dense forest, known to contain bears, moose, and other big game. His brother Jan received two estates,

Franopol and Porzecze. Franciszek, another brother, lived in St. Petersburg, where he occupied an important position in a government department. It was decided to give him money and family jewelry. My grandmother, Anna von Wrangell, received three estates: Kolpino, Rebljo, and Zabelja. The estate Kolpino had belonged to her mother, born Deszpot-Zienowicz. Originally, this estate had belonged to the Princes Oginski; Polonia Oginska was the maternal grandmother of Anna von Wrangell.

The title to the estate Porzecze was left in the name of Stanislaw Juriewicz in order to give him the necessary electoral qualification. As a Marshal of Nobility, he was supposed to own in his own name in this province not less than three thousand acres.

The only son of Stanislaw Juriewicz, Mieczyslaw, was a student at St. Petersburg University. Stanislaw Juriewicz selected one of his nephews, Conrad, son of his brother Jan as a companion for his son. They were of the same age and had been friends since childhood. As a boy, Conrad had a decided talent for music. At one time he was a pupil of Frederic Chopin, and in addition to his studies at the University, he took music lessons at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Mieczyslaw and Conrad lived together in a lavish apartment in St. Petersburg. Stanislaw Juriewicz gave them an allowance of two and a half thousand Roubles a month, an unheard-of sum of money for young students. They lived in grand style, with liveried lackeys, maintaining their own victoria carriage and slick sled for the winter, with a few anglo-Arabian horses and a liveried footman.

They did not devote much time to their studies. In their uniformed frock-coats made to order by the best tailor, and their bicorne hats, they attended practically every performance of the Imperial Ballet at the Maryinsky Theatre, and were steady guests of every fashionable cabaret. They appeared at the races and were noted for their fabulous entertainment.

Once in a while, by order of the Governor of St. Petersburg, they were deported from this Russian capital - the reason being some more-or-less innocent prank they played

on the spur of the moment, consequently getting in trouble with the St. Petersburg police.

While in St. Petersburg, Czar Nicholas I liked to take drives along Nevsky Prospect, the main street of the city. The Imperial sled, without any guards, driven by a single coachman, usually left the Winter Palace, crossed the Palace Square, went under the Arc of General Staff along Morskaja Street, and turned into Nevsky Prospect. The narrow sled of the Czar proceeded at the steady trot of two excellent horses. The tall figure of the Czar, in a gray military coat with a beaver collar and a casque of the Imperial Horse Guards Regiment, was familiar to everyone, and all carriages and sleds turned carefully to the side of the wide thoroughfare, giving way to the Imperial conveyance. It was contrary to the established regulations to pass the Imperial carriage at any time. The Czar's sled proceeded along Nevsky Prospect to a distance of little more than a mile, and usually turned back at the Anichkoff Palace and Fontanka.

One day, when the sled of the Czar turned into Nevsky Prospect and traveled at the usual speed towards Anichkoff Palace, the sled of the two Juriewicz boys also turned into Nevsky Prospect from the side of St. Isaac's Cathedral. The Czar's sled was a few blocks ahead when two gray anglo-Arabian horses, covered with a blue net, started overtaking the Imperial carriage at a steady trot. As they passed it at a full trot, the two foolish youngsters took off their bicorne hats in a polite greeting to the Sovereign.

The Czar inquired only about their identity. However, this incident constituted sufficient reason for the Governor of St. Petersburg to order their deportation.

The two youngsters did not worry much. They went straight to their father, and uncle, and laughingly told him the whole story. They were convinced that their prank was very amusing and did not expect to be reprimanded for it.

Stanislaw Juriewicz did not approve of their conduct but attributed it to their youthful foolishness. He forgave them, though he had to use all of his connections to get permission for the two boys to return to the capital and to resume their studies.

Not long afterwards, in the company of their friend, Paul Prince San Donato Demidoff (1), they conceived of another prank. Conrad and Mieczyslaw had met with Paul Demidoff at this house on Italienskaia Street for a festive lunch. After a few bottles of champagne, they were feeling elated, and one of them had a brilliant idea. They called a servant boy and ordered him to undress. They made him bend over, and drew, with a piece of charcoal, two big eyes and black eyebrows on his behind, wrapped this improvised face with a woolen shawl, and put it in front of one of the windows facing the street.

It did not take long for a crowd to gather, wondering about the strange face which was looking out of the window. The clever youngsters turned the boy, making the face turn to the right and to the left. Finally a police officer became interested in this performance, and the Juriewicz boys were again deported...

Stanislaw Juriewicz refused to consider seriously these youthful pranks. To the credit of at least one of these three young men, it is necessary to state that, later on, Paul

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(1) A direct ancestor of Paul Demidoff was a very smart and shrewd Russian peasant by the name of Nikita Demidovitch Antoufiev. Czar Peter the Great entrusted him with several important missions which Nikita accomplished successfully. As a result, the Czar granted him the well-known Taguil Silver Mines in Siberia, and Nikita Demidovitch had become one of the wealthiest men in Russia. His great-grandson, Nicholas Demidoff, lived in Florence, Italy, for many years. He purchased an old monastery by the name of « San Donato » near Florence, and built a palace there. In this palace, Nicholas Demidoff lavishly entertained hundreds of guests. After his death, his younger son, Anatol Demidoff, inherited the palace of San Donato. Anatol married Princess Mathilde de Montfort, a daughter of Jerome Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon I, and as a wedding gift, Ferdinand III, Grand Duke of Toscana (junior branch of the Habsburg family) conferred on Anatol Demidoff the title of Prince San Donato. After Anatol's death, his nephew, the young Paul Demidoff, friend of the Juriewicz boys, inherited the palace of San Donato, and Czar Alexander II granted him permission to add to his family name Demidoff the title of Prince San Donato.

Footnote of the author.

Demidoff followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Nicholas Demidoff, and donated enormous sums of money to charity. The grateful city of Florence erected on one of the city squares a marble monument to Demidoff. The statue of the generous Russian noble depicted him sitting in a chair and giving alms to a poor woman with an infant in her arms.

However, Stanislaw Juriewicz was worried by the fact that every year he had to pay a long list of debts contracted by his son and his nephew in addition to the more than liberal allowance they received from him. Usually Juriewicz was furious, and in order to soften his angry mood, Conrad would sit at the piano playing the waltzes, études, and nocturnes of Chopin. He played with so much feeling that it brought tears to his uncle's eyes, and Stanislaw Juriewicz would embrace him and his own son, making them promise not to incur debts in the future. They promised willingly, but the following year the same performance would be repeated all over again.

Stanislaw Juriewicz was desperate but had not the heart to apply stronger measures of discipline.

A series of parties and formal dinners were arranged in Vitebsk in honor of the new Marshal of Nobility. Stanislaw Juriewicz made an effort not to offend anyone and tried to attend all of them. He was very polite and friendly to everyone, but in his manner there was a certain aloofness which discouraged any familiarity.

One of the first formal dinners in his honor was arranged by his sister, Anna von Wrangell, who placed next to him her close friend, beautiful Panna Wienczeslawa Barszczewska. Panna Wienczeslawa was beautiful and vivacious as only a Polish girl of a good family can be.

It was noticed that for the first time since he had become a widower, Stanislaw Juriewicz paid a great deal of attention to one woman. Panna Wienczeslawa was young, much younger than my grandmother, with big blue eyes and thick black hair. She was tall, with a very good figure. Her repartees were clever and spontaneous. It was also noticed that she was very pleased by the attention paid to her by the handsome guest of honor.

Later, when Juriewicz arranged a large reception at his house, Panna Wienczeslawa was invited. Together they

danced mazurka, a proud Polish dance, and everybody had to admit that in spite of the difference in their age, they were a stunning-looking couple.

From that day on, there was a whirl of courtship and within a few months they were married in a ceremony attended only by relatives and close friends. On their honeymoon, they went south to Berszada and Odessa, on the shore of the Black Sea. The war prevented them from going abroad to the sunny Mediterranean.

In the meantime, my grandfather Wrangell had had a stroke. His relationship with Stanislaw Juriewicz was not too friendly because Juriewicz could not understand what prompted his sister, whom he loved so much, to marry a man who could easily have been her father. As a matter of fact, my grandmother was thirty years younger than her husband. And yet, they were happily married.

Perhaps some explanation could be found in the fact that my grandfather always exercised a very strong influence over his young wife. My grandmother was a beautiful, animated girl who adored pretty gowns, loved to attend balls, to dance, and to hear music and laughter around her. However, she suffered from sudden attacks of migraine, and sometimes she would get a terrific headache when she was dressed for a ball, and ready to get into the carriage. She would cry in her instant disappointment.

« It is nothing, Anna », my grandfather used to tell her. « You will be all right ». And, he would then make her sit on a chair, taking her head in his two hands. His fingers pressing gently on the back of her head, he would look straight into her eyes, and say, « I am telling you that you will be all right! See, your headache is already gone. It is gone! », he would repeat to her, and in a few minutes she would feel perfectly all right again, and would be ready to go to the ball.

When my grandfather, after a stroke, was partially paralyzed, she took very good care of him. She was holding his hand when he died.

An enormous crowd attended his funeral. Practically the entire Jewish population of the city followed his coffin to its last resting place, paying a final tribute to the man who was sincerely devoted to science and to his profession. He

was buried in a small cemetery at St. Barbara Roman Catholic Church, next to his first wife, Constance Nassekin. This place was reserved for him at the time of her death, some twenty-five years previously, and my grandmother did not wish to change these arrangements.

After the death of my grandfather, it was only natural that Stanislaw Juriewicz, the oldest brother of my grandmother, had become guardian of her only son, who was named after his uncle. My father was at that time eleven years old.

Stanislaw Juriewicz sent my father to a private school for boys in St. Petersburg, the high school of Mr. Philippoff. The pupils of this school wore uniforms similar to the uniforms adopted at that time for boys in government schools. The discipline in Mr. Philippoff's school was very strict; the boys were made to study hard, with special emphasis on foreign languages.

All pupils of this school were supposed on one day to speak only French, even among themselves, and on the following day, only German. Inspectors, who were Frenchmen and Germans themselves, were present at all times to enforce this rule. Besides, there was a clown's hat with the word « fool » written on it in big letters. A boy who spoke just one word not in the language of the day wore the hat. He could get rid of it only by passing it to another boy who was guilty of the same mistake in his presence. Every boy tried to get rid of the fool's cap as quickly as he could. The boys watched each other, and, as a result, within about a year's time, they could speak these two languages fluently. Russian was spoken on Saturdays and Sundays when many boys whose parents lived in St. Petersburg went home.

During the first couple of years, my father had to remain in school during the weekends. He had no close relatives living in St. Petersburg, and, evidently, his uncle Franciszek Juriewicz did not want to be bothered with a little boy. My father was very lonely and unhappy because of the rigid discipline which was the result of the influence of the harsh times of Czar Nicholas I. During his reign, the strictest discipline was enforced in the army as well as in all government offices. The same unyielding discipline was



enforced in all schools. But if the Czar, austere and inflexible, was strict with all people around him, he was just as stern and strict with himself.

It never occurred to Nicholas I to break any army regulations. He withstood the terrific sub-zero weather of St. Petersburg, attending traditional parades on the 6th of January on the bank of the Neva River, dressed, like any other officer, in a light parade uniform without a topcoat.

Very tall and handsome, the Czar was an excellent rider. Once in a while, he performed a stunt by getting on his horse and ordering two small coins to be placed between each of his knees and the sides of the saddle. As he rode, the coins were kept in place only by the pressure of his knees. If the Czar relaxed his grip just for a moment, or moved his knees, the coins would have been lost. After an hour's ride, he would return with both coins still in place.

The revolt of Decembrists in 1825 revealed the real character of Czar Nicholas I. At that time, more than one hundred persons were arrested and tried by the Supreme Criminal Tribunal, composed of the members of the Council of the Empire, Senators and members of the Holy Synod (the highest clerical council of the Russian Church). The Court sentenced about forty of the accused to death, and the others to exile and hard labor. The Czar mitigated the harshness of this verdict by limiting capital punishment to only five leaders of the revolt and banishing the others to Siberia.

One of the first railroads in Russia was called « Nicholayevskaia », connecting two Russian capitals, St. Petersburg and Moscow, a distance of about four hundred and fifty miles. The construction of this railroad was complicated by the presence of wide swamps and marshes between these two cities. Many engineering plans were presented to the Czar, but he was informed that the engineers were not influenced only by the desire of building the railroad the best possible way but by the graft paid to them by different towns and communities that saw big benefits for themselves in a railroad that would connect them with the two largest cities in Russia. The Czar perused the blueprints, but finally took a big map of European Russia and drew with a ruler a straight line connecting St. Petersburg and Moscow, and

initialled the map. The Nicholayevskaia Railroad, according to the Czar's order, was built in a straight line. The cost of construction was exceedingly high, but the maintenance and operating expenses were unusually low.

Prior to 1914, the beginning of the First World War, there was a train called « Lightning » running daily between St. Petersburg and Moscow. The difference in time between these two cities was one hour. The train « Lightning » left St. Petersburg at one o'clock in the morning, permitting the passengers to attend performances at the Imperial Theatres. Making only one stop at Bologoye, the train arrived in Moscow at eight o'clock in the morning, Moscow time, or seven o'clock St. Petersburg time. The train, with a steam locomotive, covered a distance of some four hundred and fifty miles in a little more than six hours! An unheard of speed at that time! The same « Lightning » train ran daily, about the same time, from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

When the construction of the Nicholayevskaia Railroad actually was completed, and the passenger trains began to run, Czar Nicholas I was informed that a delegation of the fabulous Moscow merchants (Imenitoye Moscovskoye Kupechestvo) had arrived in St. Petersburg to thank him for the railroad. The Czar received this delegation, and inquired about their comfort during the trip. The merchants hesitated to answer, but finally they had to admit that they had arrived in St. Petersburg to offer their thanks for the railroad, travelling by sled. The Czar only smiled and the audience was ended.

From the beginning of the Nicholas I reign, there had been vigorous activity to reform administration, justice, and finance, as well as to improve the living conditions of privately owned serfs. A financial reform was introduced by Kankrin, Secretary of the Treasury, and the old paper money was withdrawn from circulation, a Code of Laws of the Russian Empire was published, and a commission with Count Kisselev presiding, established a certain kind of self-government for the peasants of the Crown, introducing at the same time many improvements in their farming methods. However, this commission did little to improve the conditions of life of privately owned serfs, but the work of this commission, which lasted for many years, made it possible for

the son of Czar Nicholas I, Czar Alexander II, to abolish serfdom in Russia.

Czar Nicholas I was greatly attached to his oldest son, and before his death, told him, « By taking upon myself all that was hard and difficult, I intended to leave you a peaceful, well-organized, prosperous country... but Providence has decreed otherwise ». He died on the 18th of February, 1855.

After the death of Czar Nicholas I, his son, Czar Alexander II, faced the difficult problem of bringing the Crimean War to an end and maintaining at the same time the dignity of the Empire. The course of the war was not affected by the change of rulers; Sebastopol still defied the enemy, and the allies were paying a high price for every gain they made. At this time, the Russian troops won a brilliant victory at Kars in Asia. Napoleon III was anxious to make peace, and with the help of Austria and Prussia, the peace negotiations began in 1856, and, finally, the Treaty of Paris was signed.

With the accession of the young Emperor Alexander II, censorship in Russia was relaxed, universities were freed from police control, many petty restrictions were removed, and even the survivors of the 1825 mutiny, the so-called « Decembrists », were allowed to return after thirty years of exile in Siberia.

At about that time, « Uncle Tom's Cabin » was published in Russia and Mrs. Stowe was acclaimed by the Russians as a great writer. It was in great contrast to the opinion then held in Great Britain. The « London Times » wrote as follows:

« ... (« The book's »)... object is to abolish slavery. Its effect will be to render slavery more difficult than ever of abolishment. Its very popularity constitutes its greatest difficulty. It will keep ill-blood at boiling point, and irritate instead of pacifying those whose proceedings Mrs. Stowe is anxious to influence on the behalf of humanity. « Uncle Tom's Cabin » was not required to convince the haters of slavery of « the abominations of « the institution »; of all books it is the least calculated to weigh with

those whose prejudices in favor of said slavery have yet to be overcome ».

A few years previously, a Russian version of « Uncle Tom's Cabin », « A Sportsman's Sketches », a Russian classic by Turgenev had been published. Slavery was generally condemned and yet serfdom remained, a running sore across the nation's breast.

The young Czar proclaimed immediately his desire and hope for internal reforms.

In 1857, the nobility of Lithuanian provinces of Wilno, Kovno and Grodno declared their intention to set their serfs free at once, without giving them any land. Immediately, at the wish of the Czar, « Provincial Committees » of nobility were formed in many provinces for the discussion of the terms on which the serfs were to be set free, with the « Main Committee » in St. Petersburg coordinating their work.

At the beginning of 1861, the Czar personally opened a session of the Council of the Empire, declaring that the abolition of slavery was his « direct will ». The Council of the Empire acted accordingly, and on the 19th day of February (Russian calendar), 1861, the Czar signed the well-known Manifesto which was proclaimed to the nation on the 5th day of March of the same year.

This Manifesto was read throughout Russia, in all Russian cities and towns, as well as on all landed estates, to crowds of serfs.

« Bless yourself with the Sign of the Cross, Russian people », were the opening words of the Czar's Manifesto, and the nobles and peasants alike knelt solemnly, making the sign of the Cross, and listening to the words of their Lord Anointed Sovereign.

The power of landowners to hold peasants in servitude was abolished at once without compensation to the nobles. Peasants were permitted to use the homesteads, vegetable gardens and fertile fields given to them by their landowners. For the use of them, they were supposed to repay their former masters either in money or in labor. The peasants were also to receive later some fertile land as their own personal property. This land to be purchased by them from the landowners.



*Czar Alexander II*  
*from the oil painting of Paul Bulow,*  
*from the collection of Mr. Henri Antoville.*



This Act of Liberation, although bringing tremendous social and economic changes, was not accompanied by a civil war. All classes accepted peacefully the manifesto of the Czar and obeyed his order.

Stanislaw Juriewicz had been working in the Provincial Committee of Vitebsk since this committee had been organized. He greeted the manifesto of the Czar with great relief and satisfaction. The idea of serfdom was repulsive to him. He had always treated his serfs not as slaves, but as human beings, and he succeeded in making his nephew, my father, feel the same way, although my father saw very little of his uncle. My father admired his uncle and tried always to imitate him in every way. Besides, he was greatly attached to his old « niania » (nurse), an old peasant woman who took care of my grandmother when she was a child, and who afterwards took care of her son. When on vacations, my father visited my grandmother's estate Kolpino, he would run to greet and kiss tenderly his « niania » who had a room of her own in the Kolpino house and lived there as a member of the family.

All his life my father treated all servants, all workmen, all peasants with great consideration. He never tried to belittle any one of them.

## RUSSIAN FLEET IN NEW YORK HARBOR

### CHAPTER V

At the time of the abolition of serfdom in Russia, my father, Stanislaw Wrangell, was sixteen years old. He was already in the last class of the High School of Mr. Philippoff.

A couple of years previously, it had been arranged for my father to live in the apartment of General Clemens, a friend of Stanislaw Juriewicz. Living outside of his school in a private apartment gave him more freedom but he had to study just as hard as before. In addition to his studies, he took private lessons in fencing and dancing. His dancing teacher was Felix Krzesinski, (pronounced Kschessinsky), a dancer of the Imperial Ballet. Felix Krzesinski was the father of the well-known ballerina Mathilde Krzesinska, who, after the revolution became the morganatic wife of the Grand Duke Andrew, first cousin of the last Czar, under the name of Princess Krassinskaia.

While dancing the mazurka in the opera, «The Life for the Czar», Krzesinski always received ovations from St. Petersburg society. He taught my father how to bow, enter a room, and kiss the hand of a lady, which was really an art gracefully done. My father learned all these manners in a most perfect and charming way. Even in his later years, it was a pleasure to watch him as he entered a drawing room, holding himself straight, and carrying high his handsome head covered with thick gray hair. He would approach his hostess, bow, and kiss her hand. There was so much dignity in his manner that a lady could not help but feel herself at this moment a queen!



At the age of sixteen, my father was quite tall, with an athletic figure, very slim, and with thick red hair, the colour of dark bronze. He spoke French and German fluently, Polish like a true Pole with a Warsaw accent, and Russian was his native tongue.

As soon as he had been graduated from the high school, he was sent to the University of Heidelberg by his guardian, Stanislaw Juriewicz. In a few years, my father returned to Russia and entered St. Petersburg University to study law.

In 1863, another Polish uprising took place. It was a revolt of Polish intelligentsia and szlachta (lesser nobility), but the masses of Polish peasants did not take part in it. Polish szlachta and intelligentsia longed for Polish independence, and the European powers, especially Great Britain and France, took immediate advantage of this situation, offering their services as mediators between the Czarist Russian government and the Poles. These offers were embarrassing to the Russian government. By accepting their services, the government of the Czar would have automatically recognized the independence of Poland. Consequently, the Czarist government declined the offer of the European powers and proceeded to suppress the revolt.

There was never a formal alliance between the Russian Empire and the United States, but the Great Emancipator abolished serfdom in his own country, had deep sympathies for Abraham Lincoln, who was trying to abolish slavery in the United States.

The Czar was possibly the only real friend Abraham Lincoln had outside the United States. Russia refused to recognize the Southern Confederacy, and the United States, in turn, refrained from offering to the Czar its help in mediation between the Czarist government and the Poles.

On September 11, 1863, a Russian steam frigate «The Oslyabia» entered New York harbor. It was announced that Mrs. Lincoln intended to visit the Oslyabia, and all newspapers described in great detail the friendly reception which the First Lady received on this foreign warship.

The Oslyabia was the first Russian warship to arrive. It was followed by many others until virtually the entire Russian Baltic Fleet was anchored in New York Harbor and

in Flushing Bay. Admiral Lessovsky was in command of the fleet. His flagship was a brand new steam frigate, the « Alexander Nevsky ». Among the officers of one of the Russian warships was Grand Duke Alexis, son of the Czar, at that time a young Lieutenant in the Russian Navy.

In order to keep secret the movement of the Russian fleet and to avoid possible interference on the part of the British warships that could easily lead to war, all Russian warships stationed in the Baltic received orders to proceed to different European, African and Asiatic ports, with sealed envelopes to be opened at sea. The sealed envelopes contained orders to sail straight to New York.

The Russian ships, emerging from the Baltic into the Atlantic, took a course well north of the Orkney Islands. The ships were heavily laden with ammunition and supplies, and could not carry much coal. Therefore, a crossing of the Atlantic was made under sail. The result was a complete secrecy of the movements of the Russian fleet. The British admiralty received the first report only when the Russians had already anchored their warships in New York Harbor.

About the same time, the Russian Asiatic Fleet, under the command of Admiral Popov, arrived in San Francisco.

The relationship between Russia and Great Britain and France was far from friendly. Lord Palmerston, a well-known British statesman, was dreaming and hoping for dismemberment of the Russian Empire — Finland was supposed to be returned to Sweden, the Baltic Provinces (Esthonia and Latvia) to be given to Prussia, Poland was supposed to become an independent Kingdom, the provinces in the estuary of the Danube were to be given to Austria, and Crimea and Georgia in the Russian Caucasus were to be given to the Ottoman Empire. Such were the intentions of the allies prior to the Crimean War, and now a Polish uprising gave them new hope for a realization of their dreams. The French armed forces already occupied Mexico, and Napoleon III proposed to Great Britain and Austria to declare war on Russia immediately.

No treaty was signed between Russia and the United States, but their mutual interest, and the threat of war to both, united these two nations at this critical moment. By

dispatching his Baltic Fleet to the North American harbors, the Czar changed his position from a defensive to an offensive one. Paragraph 3 of the instructions given to Admiral Lessovsky by Admiral Krabbe, at that time Russian Secretary of the Navy, dated July 14th, 1863, ordered the Russian Fleet, in case of war, to attack the enemies' commercial shipping and their colonies, so as to cause them the greatest possible damage.

The same instructions were given to Admiral Popov, Commander of the Russian Asiatic Fleet.

The news of the arrival of the Russian fleet caused jubilation in the United States. The Russian national anthem, « God Save the Czar » was played; the Brooklyn Navy Yard was placed at the disposal of the Russians, and many delegations came to welcome them. Admiral David Farragut met Admiral Lessovsky; they had known each other before as young officers in the Mediterranean. Answering a question put by Farragut, Admiral Lessovsky stated that he was in New York under sealed orders. « They can be opened only in a contingency which has not yet occurred », he added.

There were parades and all kinds of festivities arranged in honor of the Russian officers and their Sovereign. On November 5, 1863, a grand ball was arranged at the Academy of Music in honor of the Russians. I quote Alexandre Tarsaidze, who wrote in his book, « Czars and Presidents », as follows:

« The costumes of the American ladies were voluminous and the ladies themselves buxom and determined. One Russian officer wrote home that if Russian girls ever manifested a small portion of the interest shown by the American beauties, there would not be a bachelor in the whole Empire. The women wore buttons from the coats of Russian officers, and blue and white ribbons in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross. There were cockades from Naval caps and anchors taken from Midshipmen's caps.

« A supper from Delmonico's was served in Irving Hall, which had been temporarily joined by a gay canopy to the Academy of Music. Food was plentiful,

frequently disguised and decorated with figures of Peter the Great, George Washington, Lincoln, and Alexander II made out of sugar and cake, as well as frosted statues. Greek temples, eagles, lions and Dianas. The 'New York World' with a statistical turn of mind, perhaps best indicates the lavishness of the occasion — 12,000 oysters, 1,200 game birds, 250 turkeys, 400 chickens, 12 monster salmon of thirty pounds each, and a thousand pounds of steak. Not to mention desserts, pièces montées, a hundred pyramids of pastry, a thousand large loaves of bread, and 3,500 bottles of wine ».

President Lincoln, in his Thanksgiving Proclamation, stated: « God's bounties of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart ».

The surprise move of the Russian Czar caused consternation in British government circles. Moreover, Great Britain had no desire to antagonize Russia for another reason. These two Empires, a maritime one and a territorial one, had in Asia a common border many thousands of miles long. The northern part of Asia, Siberia, was a Russian territory, and the southern part of this continent was British. Some buffer states were in between — Persia, Afghanistan and China. In 1840, in a campaign in Central Asia, Russian troops occupied northern Turkestan and the valley of Syr-Daria, approaching Pamir and Afghanistan.

On the other hand, a short but terrible Sepoy's rebellion in India had been suppressed by the Britishers only six years previously, in 1857, and Great Britain was simply horrified at the prospect of war with Russia because of possible complications this war could cause in Asia. There were never more than about 60,000 British troops in India, the Suez Canal was not built yet, and the Afghan population of the northwestern frontier province of British India was ready for an uprising at any moment. And, finally, the most important point was that the Russians were right there, on the border of Afghanistan. Under these conditions, His Britannic Majesty's government was compelled to refrain from any interference in the Polish uprising as well as in the Civil War in the United States.

**RESOLUTIONS** *providing for* **Admiral Farragut and the Officers**  
**of the Russian Frigates** *now in, or to arrive at, New York harbor to visit the* **City of Philadelphia.**

Resolved, by the **Mayor and City Council of Philadelphia**, That a committee, consisting of the **Mayor** and **Residents of the First and Second Branches of the Council** and **other members from each Branch**, to be appointed by said **Branches** together with six **citizens** to be selected by the **Mayor**, be appointed, who shall proceed to the **City of New York**, and extend an invitation to the **OFFICERS OF THE RUSSIAN SHIPS OF WAR** now in or shortly to arrive at that port, to visit the **City of Philadelphia** at such time as may suit their convenience and to accept of its hospitalities, as a **testament of the high regard of the authorities and citizens of Philadelphia for the Sovereign and people of Russia**, who, when other powers and people, more strongly bound to us by the ties of interest or common descent have lent material and moral aid to the **Fields of the South**, have generously advanced from all attempts to resist the rebellion, and have given our Government reliable assurances of their sympathy and good will.

Resolved, That a similar invitation be at the same time extended to **Admiral Farragut**, who has rendered such noble service, in connection with our navy, in destroying and capturing so many of the strongholds of the rebellion.

Resolved, That the committee thus appointed be and they are hereby authorized, to take all the necessary steps for carrying out the measures proposed in these resolutions.



Approved March 5th 1863

Wm. Chapman, Mayor.

*James Spring*

President of the Branch.

*Wm. Spring*

President of the Branch.



Czar Alexander II had no malice in his heart against Great Britain. In 1873, the British government succeeded in obtaining from St. Petersburg a declaration that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of Russian influence, and the following years a daughter of the Czar, Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna, was married in St. Petersburg to the second son of Queen Victoria, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1871, Grand Duke Alexis, at this time already an admiral, arrived in New York on a good will mission to the United States. The Astor House displayed a huge sign:

GRAND DUKE ALEXIS  
SON OF A NOBLE FATHER  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THIS NATION'S  
DEARLY CHERISHED ALLY

However, President Grant, who was not well-versed in the diplomatic protocol, and courtesy, did not extend a very friendly reception to the Russian Grand Duke, and Alexis did not stay long in Washington. He returned to New York where all sorts of festivities were arranged in his honor, and made a tour of the United States, visiting Niagara Falls, St. Louis, Chicago, and the western plains. At Fort McPherson, Buffalo Bill was awaiting him. Alexis was a good rider and took an active part in a buffalo hunt.

In the years 1863 and 1864, while my father, Stanislaw Wrangell, was studying at the University of St. Petersburg, Czar Alexander II used to visit the university quite frequently and informally address the students. His dog, a gray pointer, was well known to the students, who made the dog sit next to them in the auditorium, while the Czar ascended the rostrum.

Czar Alexander II was tall and very good-looking. He spoke several foreign languages as fluently as Russian, and it made him use a number of foreign words. He had a very pleasant voice, and 'il grasseyait' (not pronouncing distinctly the letter « r »). The students adored the Czar. Often they managed in some mysterious way to steal cigarettes from his cigarette case for souvenirs. It happened quite often that the Czar, desiring to smoke, was forced to ask the students to return to him a cigarette, which they did reluctantly.

One day the Czar told the students about an attempt on his life which had been made the previous day. This attempt had taken place at the gates of the Summer Garden, a public park adorned with marble statues of Greek gods, on the Quai of Neva, not far from the Winter Palace. The Czar usually took his daily walk in this garden. On this particular day, as he emerged from the gates and was ready to enter a carriage awaiting him at the Quai, he noticed a man standing on the sidewalk about twenty feet away. The Czar told the students that an unpleasant thought crossed his mind at that moment... that this man was ready to shoot at him. At that moment, the man pulled a pistol from his pocket, and, taking careful aim, fired, but, at the same time, someone pushed the elbow of the would-be assassin, causing the bullet to go astray. The man was seized by passersby and by the police. His name was Dmitri Karagozov, or Karakzov. This time, the Czar was miraculously saved. However, there were other attempts on his life. More than one attempt was made to blow up the Imperial train.

As surprising as it may seem, no attempts were made on the life of the Czar that had been arranged by former slave-owners. On the contrary, Czar Alexander II was exceedingly popular among Russian nobles and was held in great esteem by the peasants and masses of the Russian people. All attempts on the life of this sovereign were arranged by a revolutionary group of intellectuals who called themselves «Nihilists», from a Latin word, «nihil», nothing. Nihilism was a philosophy of skepticism, a revolt against the established social order. It negated all authority exercised by the State, by the Church, or by the family. The Nihilists claimed that they believed in science, but it was an abstract idea. They did not offer anything constructive, and actually their philosophy served only as an excuse for outrageous killings and destruction.

After Karagozov's attempt, all of Russia offered prayers of thanks to the Lord for the miraculous escape of the Czar. In the United States, the House and the Senate passed, and President Andrew Johnson signed, a joint resolution congratulating the Russian people on the escape of their Emperor. It was the only time that the United States had sent a message to a foreign nation expressing its personal feeling



for the sovereign. Gustavus Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, delivered the message to St. Petersburg.

The savage attempts on his life did not stop the Czar. He continued to appear on the streets and in public places, without guards, and continued to introduce new reforms in Russia. In 1864, he introduced judicial reforms. He abolished class tribunals and established a justice «equal for all subjects». For minor cases, he established Justices of the Peace courts, the judges to be elected, and in some provinces, appointed for life. For criminal cases, he established a court by jury. The administration of justice was separated from other branches of government. Corporal punishment, rods, floggings, running the gauntlet, bastinado, branding and other cruelties were abolished. The Czar had given Russia «prompt, fair, merciful justice, equal for all subjects».

It was at this time that my father went through final examinations and received his degree of Doctor Juris. In Poland and Belorussia, the newly created Justices of the Peace were to be appointed by the government. Through Count Pahlen, Secretary of Justice, my father received an appointment as Justice of the Peace in the locality of his estate. He was only twenty-two years old, and became the youngest judge of the entire Province of Vitebsk.

## PEASANT COMMUNES

### CHAPTER VI

In 1862, Stanislaw Juriewicz resigned after serving his third term as a Nobility Marshal of the Province of Vitebsk. He could have easily won election for a fourth term, but he decided to retire, and announced his resignation. For his outstanding work on the Committee for the Liberation of the peasants, he received the Order of St. Anna, decorated with an Imperial Crown.

Stanislaw Juriewicz was very much in love with his second wife, beautiful Lady Wienczeslawa, who bore him a son, Paul. At the time of the resignation of his father, Paul was seven years old. With their enormous household, the Juriewiczes moved back to Berszada and to their house in Odessa, on the shores of the Black Sea. The entire population of Vitebsk was sorry to see them leave. Especially sorry were the Jewish merchants, for they were losing a rich customer.

The only sister of Stanislaw Juriwicz, my grandmother, Anna von Wrangell, lived, after the death of my grandfather, in Kolpino, an estate in the northern part of the Province of Vitebsk.

The old house of Kolpino was a one-story building built of heavy logs, with a gabled roof and four tall columns at the main entrance. Different parts of the house had been built at different times; therefore, its shape was somewhat rambling and irregular. Inside, the house was cozy and comfortable. The walls and ceilings were covered with white plaster tinted blue. Wooden floors were never painted. In

some places, especially at the thresholds of the doorways, the wood was worn through by many decades of heavy hunting boots, ladies' light slippers, or bare feet of the servants. The furniture was also of different periods, collected by the different generations.

In all the bedrooms of the house were crucifixes, Roman Catholic icons and prie-Dieus. In the large gallery hung the portraits of the members of the three different families which had previously owned the house. all painted in oil, and in old heavy bronze frames.

The Princes Oginski, descendants of Rurik, were the original owners of the house. At that time, the estate was extensive; three thousand male serfs lived on it. (In Russia at that time, while counting serfs only the men were counted; women and children were omitted). Princess Polonia Oginski, my great-great grandmother, married Joseph Deszpot-Zienowicz, and their daughter Anna married Joseph Juriewicz, father of my grandmother.

The house was surrounded by an old park planted by the Princes Oginski. The large avenues of the park were very impressive. The trees were of enormous heights, and their intertwining branches made a thick, leafy roof high above the ground so that even on a sunny day, the park was dark and cool. There was a small artificial lake, and the park was surrounded by a large canal. The Princes Oginski used to illuminate the park with lights and fireworks, and their guests used to ride in gondolas on this canal around the park.

On a hill next to the park was the family cemetery of the owners of the estate. Here representatives of three different families were lying peacefully side by side. Trees grew on the hill, and their long branches touched the stone crosses and marble monuments of the graves. Not far from this hill stood a Roman Catholic chapel of the estate, built of stone in a Gothic style.

On the right side of the house was a yard with stables for horses, and an adjacent enclosure for carriages and sleds. Beyond, there were administrative buildings with the superintendent's house, barns, stables for cattle and working houses, and houses of workmen and their families.

Directly in front of the house, on the other side of the wide highway leading to it, was a lake.

The greater part of the ten thousand acre estate was covered by forests, although there were about seven hundred acres of water. Besides the small Kolpino Lake, there were two larger ones, Ostrovito and Krupovo Lakes, which belonged to the estate. The country was hilly and was renowned for its beauty. From a high hill opened a beautiful panorama of surrounding country with its fields, deep green meadows and forests. The skies were brilliant blue, and the many lakes sparkled under the bright sun.

During the high school years of my father, and also later, while he was attending the University of St. Petersburg, he used to come to Kolpino to visit his mother, and to spend his summer vacations there. He would swim in the lake and ride horseback through the forests. He would, after the first of July, go with his pointers to shoot woodcocks, and later in the season, partridges and other game. There were young people of his age, sons and daughters of the neighboring landowners, who used to visit one another, taking long walks or rides through the country, and in the evening they danced to the accompaniment of a piano. One of the elderly ladies, Pani Skorulska, was an accomplished musician, and usually played dance music for the younger generation.

Two summers prior to his graduation, my father found in Kolpino his two cousins, daughters of his uncle Jan Juriewicz, who were invited by my grandmother for the summer.

My father probably had met his cousins before, but did not remember them. The older of the two, Adelaide, was very attractive, and it soon became obvious that they were considerably drawn to each other. The fact that they were first cousins made it possible for a closer, more intimate relationship between them, and Adelaide, or Adela, became a constant dancing partner of my father.

At the beginning, my grandmother did not attach any importance to the behavior of her son. She was convinced that it was only passing infatuation, and she invited her nieces to come to Kolpino for the following summer, too,

but at the end of the second summer, she was disagreeably surprised when her son, at that time only nineteen, declared that he was desperately in love with Adela, that the young girl also shared his feelings, and that he was determined to marry her.

Adela's mother was dead, and there were no objections to the marriage on the part of her father, Jan Juriewicz, but a marriage between first cousins was not regarded favorably at that time. Besides, Adela was three years older than my father, and most important, she was not a strong, healthy girl. She had weak lungs, was inclined to become consumptive, and the doctors doubted that she could ever have physically sound children.

But all objections and protests of my grandmother and of Stanislaw Juriewicz, my father's guardian, were in vain. The young people remained determined, and as soon as my father passed his final examinations, they were married in a small Kolpino chapel. My grandmother gave to my father as a wedding present the estate Rebljo, situated on a lake which was ten miles long, and at the other end touched the highway St. Petersburg-Vitebsk. The newly-weds settled there. A few years later, my father received his appointment as Justice of the Peace of his district.

In spite of his youth, my father proved to be a very good judge. He had a keen and alert mind, and sound judgment. No prejudices of any kind. Being an aristocrat, he was convinced that one of the most important duties of the nobility as a privileged class was to serve as an example to the rest of the population, proving personal integrity and fairness in all dealings. Therefore, he was strict and demanding towards the members of his own class. Somehow, the peasants and the Jews sensed his attitude, and in a short time he became very popular among them.

At this time, commissions were formed throughout Russia to condemn the land of the landowners, and to distribute these lands among the peasants. It was an enormous task, and the work of these commissions lasted for several years.

The commissions for distribution of the land were composed of a surveyor who measured the land, of at least

one agricultural expert, and a handful of government officials. Representatives of the local landowners and peasants played only a consultant's role. The local Justice of the Peace had to insure that no one's interests were unduly jeopardized, and that all parties concerned would agree to the decisions made by these commissions.

The Act of Liberation of February 19, 1861, provided that the newly created free farmers would receive land. The former serfs of the Crown were to receive government land, but for privately owned serfs the land was to be taken by the government from their former masters. For this purpose, the commissions received special instructions from the government.

The noble landowners were supposed to be reimbursed for the land taken away from them in five percent government bonds, and the peasants were to redeem these obligations by payments to the Exchequer over a period of forty-nine years, i.e., until 1910.

In different parts of the Empire, the size of the land to be taken by the government from the nobles differed according to the climate and quality of the soil. Where the soil was productive, less was to be taken, but where the soil was of poor quality, more was to be taken, etc.

The government directed these commissions to confiscate mostly fertile land, fields, meadows and pastures. The forests were to be left in the hands of the nobles in order to preserve them. In Russia, even at that time, forests were under government protection, and no one had the right to cut down his own forest without permission from the Department of Agriculture.

Commissions for distributing the land among the peasants began their work with the counting of all the villages which belonged to a certain estate, and by counting the male population of every village. Then this commission studied the soil in different parts of the estate, determining how much land of the estate was to be condemned. The government officials insisted on taking more land than usual from the Polish nobles. This action by the Czarist government was prompted by a recent Polish uprising in which these Polish nobles took an active part.

The Polish landowners did not protest and accepted confiscation of their land in good spirit.

In Kolpino, due to the fact that my grandmother was Polish, although she did not take part in any uprising, the government condemned about one half of the estate. Part of the forest was also condemned. The peasants were supposed to cut this forest down, turning the land into fields. After work of the commission was finished, Kolpino emerged as an estate of only about five thousand acres. In addition, it was divided in two parts — a larger one, with the Kolpino house, park and administrative buildings in the center, and a smaller one, called Alushkovo, comprising only forest and marshes. Between these two parts were situated villages of our former serfs, with a wide strip of land which now became their property.

Both the lakes Ostrovito and Krupovo were cut off from the estate by the land given the peasants.

The management of the estate was considerably disrupted by this division. Alushkovo became for all practical purposes a hunting lodge. In order to guard the forest and to preserve good hunting, my grandmother ordered the construction of a small farm there with a couple of hundred acres of fertile land and meadows. This farm was rented to a farmer for a negligible sum. Actually, he, his brother, and all the members of their families became forest guards, and one of their duties was to prevent shooting by strangers on the marshes and in the forest of Alushkovo.

Both lakes Ostrovito and Krupovo were known for excellent fishing, but since the shores belonged now to the peasants, it became impossible to prevent them from fishing at any time they pleased, mercilessly depleting the supply. Therefore, on the advice of her superintendent, my grandmother decided to rent both lakes to the same peasants. In return, they obligated themselves to work with their wagons and horses for four days a year, at the time when all stables of the estate were cleaned, and dung was carried to the fields.

The commission marked the new border of the estate by cutting swaths in a straight line through the forests and by establishing landmarks at the points where a straight

line of the border changed direction. At these points, holes were dug in the ground and filled with rocks forming bulky piles on top. In order to imprint, for years to come, in the minds of the newly created free farmers the new border of the estate of their former masters, the commission ordered the spanking of half a dozen peasant boys of a neighboring village on every pile of rocks that represented a landmark. The result was that some fifty years later, an old peasant could find without any difficulty the landmark where he got his spanking. The new border of the estate ran in somewhat zig-zag lines with many rock piles. Consequently, many peasant boys received their spankings in those days.

The fact that at that time more land was taken away from the Polish landowners did not seriously antagonize them against the government because they were paid for the confiscated land. However, it is necessary to admit that the government appraisal of land was in this case considerably below its market value, and the landowners were not paid in cash. Instead, they received the five percent government bonds (*vykupnyie svidetelstva*), which could have been sold at only about eighty percent of their face value. Consequently, the landowners received only about sixty percent of the market value of their land.

But the Russian government invented another more vicious method to punish the Poles, who for some reason were never liked by the Russians. Against many Polish landowners the government proceeded to impose the so-called «servituty» on their forests (*nalojit servituty na lesa*) by granting the peasants the right to use the landowners' forests as pasture for their cattle. The presence of cattle made forestry an impossible task... all the young trees were trampled and crushed.

Also, in many cases, the forest of a landowner was quite a distance from the border of his estate, and an unfortunate Polish landowner was forced to build fences on both sides of the road leading to his forest in order to protect his fields from being trampled. Furthermore, when cattle belonging to peasants were in his forest, it happened quite often that intentionally, or unintentionally, some cows were permitted by peasant boys to walk out of the forest into a field of ripe oats.



This unprecedented privilege granted to the peasants by the Czarist government led only to aggravations, continuous disputes, and lawsuits between the Polish landowners and their former serfs. However, this privilege did not really benefit the peasants, because pasture in a forest was always very poor. It served only to annoy the landowners, causing them considerable damages.

In Berszada and Nestoyda, estates of Stanislaw Juriewicz in Podolia, the government imposed «servituty» on his very valuable forests of beechtrees. The former Nobility Marshal, who worked for many years to liberate the peasants, was forced to give his former serfs large pieces of his valuable land. In return, the peasants agreed to give up their right of letting their cattle graze in his forests.

My father could never find any excuse for these actions of the Czarist government. He doubted that all the facts were known to the Czar, who sincerely wished and worked hard for the welfare of all his subjects. For these acts, unworthy of a great Empire, my father blamed high government officials who felt revengeful towards Polish nobles, or possibly envied them.

The government commissions, while distributing land to the peasants, did not give each head of the family a piece of land for his own individual farming. Instead, a large piece of land was given to the entire village, **thus making it a collective enterprise.**

By order of the government, every peasant village in Russia became a self-governing community, where the bailiff (starosta) of the village was elected by free ballots, and all important questions were decided at general meetings of all members of the community.

The community exercised considerable power over every individual member.

In Czarist Russia, every individual was supposed to have a passport duly issued by proper authorities and registered at the police station in the precinct where the owner of this passport resided. An exception to this rule were all Russian peasants who lived in their villages. However, to leave his village and establish a residence somewhere else, a peasant needed a passport which was issued to him,

usually without any difficulties, by the township of his village (by Volostnoy starshina) for a period of six months, and then re-extended. However, at the village's request, the Volostnoy Starshina could refuse to issue or to renew the passport of an individual peasant, and this unfortunate soul would then be obliged to stay in his community, or to return home against his wish.

In other words, according to the Act of Liberation of February 19, 1861, Russian peasants became free, but within a few years it became apparent that their freedom was limited to a great extent by their own communities or villages.

Every village was recognized as a « commune » (in Russian, *obschina*). **This commune received the title to the lend.** An individual peasant had only a portion of the land in his commune. This portion, or share, was called « *nadel* », and as we are going to see, the *nadel* did not represent any particular piece or section of land.

Since every village became a self-governing community, peasants proceeded to divide the entire land of their commune among all male members of this commune who reached maturity (eighteen years of age). To give every member an equally good piece of land, every fertile field was divided in as many strips as there were male members of the commune. Meadows, forests and pastures remained in the hands of a commune as a whole. Thus, the landholding of each peasant consisted actually of many strips of land in different fields, and a share of benefits derived from meadows, pastures and forests belonging to his commune.

Moreover, the size of the *nadel* did not remain constant. Every year, some old peasant died, and some young boys became of age, and were entitled to a *nadel* of their own. Thus, every four or five years, and in many villages even more often, at a general meeting, peasants counted again all male members of their communes and re-divided all their fields accordingly. **Thus, Russian peasants were deprived completely of the individual ownership of land.**

Possibly the logic of this system of communes is not very clear. It took a true Russian mind to create it, and for a European or an American, it is rather difficult to appreciate it at all.

## THE SLAVOPHILS

### CHAPTER VII

What were the reasons which prompted the Czarist government at the time of distribution of land to the peasants to establish a system of communes which was destined half a century later to lead Russia to a revolution and to a Communist form of government?

It is most likely that Czar Alexander II (1855-1881) did not know anything about the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx which was published in 1848. In the Act of Liberation of 1861, there was nothing to indicate that the Czar intended to organize peasants' communes, but, unfortunately, the high officials of the government and the close associates of the Czar were **Slavophiles**. These Slavophiles, at the time of distribution of the land, succeeded in influencing the government to act according to their ideas.

During the reign of the Emperor Nicholas I (1825-1855), in the decade of 1830-1840, in Russian universities, and especially in Moscow University, a new movement appeared. It was a movement of idealistic professors who dug deep into the very foundations of Russian history and the Russian national mind. The followers of this movement became known as Slavophiles.

They declared that the Russian type of civilization was far superior to the European one. They sought to discover the peculiar genius of Russian civilization in the old peasants' communes which, they said, revealed the « **socialistic soul** » of Russia, as contrasted to the « **individualistic soul** » of Western Europe, and of the whole world as well. They

condemned Czar Peter the Great's « Europeanization » of Russia as a fatal deviation from the genuine course of Russian history, and wanted Russia to return to the forsaken principles of the Eastern (Greek Catholic) Church and the Byzantine Empire — **Orthodoxy and Autocracy.**

One of their ideas was to unite all Slavonic nations under the scepter of the Russian Czars. This Russian « Monroe Doctrine » was destined to direct the foreign policy of the Czarist government for about the last fifty years of its existence, and to involve Russia in World War I.

The Slavophil movement was nationalistic, and the followers were upholding the autocratic principles of the Russian Empire. Therefore, Czar Nicholas I was not frightened by the socialist and communist tendencies of the Slavophiles. On the contrary, the movement found sympathy and support from the Czar. It was growing rapidly, and at the time of the liberation of the peasants, many high government officials and even devoted friends of Czar Alexander II were Slavophiles, like Nicholas Milutin, Soloviev, Samarin, Aksakov, Prince Cherkassky, and many others. At the time of the distribution of land, the Slavophiles influenced the Czarist government to reinstate the archaic communes.

As it often happens with abstract idealists, the Russian professors who started the Slavophil movement in about 1840 were radically wrong. Their assumption that the system of communes which they discovered in old, pre-historic Russia represented a characteristically Russian form was wrong, and yet, they succeeded in reinstating primitive communes in Russia! Furthermore, they, defended stubbornly this archaic form as the only form suitable for Russian peasants!

The Czarist government conceded to the incorrect ideas of the Slavophiles for more practical reasons. First of all, it was easier for the government to collect taxes from the villages than from each individual peasant. Also, it was easier to rule over the people who were herded into communes and were deprived of individual initiative.

Besides, the Slavophiles argued that the system of communes solved a problem of unemployment. As poor as a peasant could have been, he was still a member of his commune. And the Czarist government was afraid of the

proletariat, i.e., wage-earning working class. They could not foresee at that time astonishing industrial developments and the coming demands of industry.

As a result, Russian peasants, having been freed from their noble masters, **found themselves very soon in a bondage of their own communes! They were not free!**

However, the archaic system of communes was not introduced to the entire Russian Empire. It did not exist in Finland, in the Baltic Provinces (after the revolution called Esthonia and Latvia), in Lithuania or in Poland.

As a matter of fact, Baltic nobles set their serfs free according to a special petition they presented to the Czar, prior to the Act of Liberation in 1861. The landowners of these provinces (Estland, Livland and Kurland) gave land to their former serfs, dividing this land into small farms of about twenty to twenty-five acres each. Such a farm was granted to each head of a family on the condition that he could leave his farm to one of his sons, but had no right to divide it among his children. In this way the farm remained intact and the farmer had only the right to select his heir. This system was established on the assumption that all the other children who did not inherit any land would learn a trade. Baltic nobles did not attribute to their former serfs any supernatural, mystic qualities, and solved the problem of distribution of land from a practical, European point of view. As a result, some fifty years later, in spite of the terrific impact of a revolution and the highly publicized genius of Lenin, **these parts of the Empire stubbornly resisted Communism.**

Needless to say, the system of communes was never introduced to the natives of the Russian Caucasus, where Joseph Stalin was born. The Georgians put up a stubborn fight against the Communists in 1920, but the Soviet troops outnumbered them and in spite of their heroic resistance, the Caucasians were conquered and included in the Soviet Union. Stalin could not tolerate his own native Georgia repudiating his leadership.

In the years when the distribution of land to the peasants took place, not all Russian nobles were Slavophiles. The majority of them looked with apprehension at the newly

established peasants' communes, but after the Act of Liberation of 1861, peasants were not their problem any longer. They were now a problem of the government.

Since time immemorial, Russian nobles had managed their estates without sufficient working capital, and now, in spite of the fact that the government bonds they received in payment for their lands were selling at seventy-seven percent of their face value, landowners were anxious to get cash that they needed badly, and were more interested in how much money they could realize from the sale of government bonds than in the future destinies of their former serfs.

Acting as a Justice of the Peace attached to a government commission in his precinct, my father could not possibly foresee all the evils that the system of communes was to bring to Russia. According to the Russian standards, being half German and half Polish, my father was considered « foreign born » (inorodetz) and, therefore, from the point of view of Slavophiles, was unable to appreciate all the depths of a true Russian mind.

On the other hand, by his upbringing and education, my father was a European, and always regarded Russian intellectuals with a certain contempt. From my father's point of view, Slavophiles were narrow-minded, gullible people who were envious of Western Europe and its cultural achievements. Their psychology was fitted better to the ancient Dukedom of Moscow, with all their stupid prejudices, than to the great Empire that Russia had become, with some two hundred different nationalities, different races, religions, and traditions. The true Russians (Velikorossy), not counting the Ukrainians, represented only about fifty percent of the population of this Empire. This conglomeration of different nations, European as well as Asiatic, from the Baltic Sea and Carpathian Mountains to the far away borders of China and the Pacific Coast, from the Black Sea, Caucasian Mountains and borders of Afghanistan to the tundras of the Arctic Circle, was held together by the Crown, by the « White Czar » of the endless Kirghis and Kalmyk steppes, who was supposed to be a ruler **equally benevolent to all his subjects, disregarding their race, creed or religion.**

My father did not hesitate to show his aversion to the Slavophil ideas, and soon acquired a reputation of a « Polish rebel ». He was convinced that Russian peasants were proprietors craving to possess things which they did not even need, but which, for some unknown reason, had a certain value in their eyes. For instance, peasants often could not resist stealing any metal bolts, nuts, screws and other parts of any machine or carriage, although these metal parts had no practical use for them.

In the summer, all agricultural machines stood in an open shed, in constant use, and it was strictly forbidden for any peasant to come anywhere near the shed. The peasants had an uncanny ability to unscrew some nuts from a machine, unnoticed by anyone, and steal them, together with some small part, if their good luck prevailed; later on, a blacksmith had a difficult time replacing the stolen parts when this particular machine was badly needed in the fields.

It certainly was much more important for each peasant to possess his own individual piece of land than all sorts of metal parts of different machines!

Knowing this trait in the character of the Russian peasants, my father doubted very much that they would be happy living in communes. But, my father was very young at that time, and was very much in love. On the 1st of December, 1864, his first son was born and named Albert-Carl-Johann. A couple of years later my half-sister Anna-Leonida (Nussia) was born, and my father and his wife Adela were extremely happy. However, their happiness was to be short-lived.

My grandmother had been suffering from severe pains in the abdomen for some time, and, finally, doctors diagnosed that she had cancer. There was no cure for cancer at that time. All the doctors could do was to relieve her of pain with injections of morphine. Her brother, Stanislaw Juriewicz, invited her immediately to come, to his home in Odessa, where the climate was better and where she could get much better care.

Leaving for Odessa, my grandmother realized that it was her last journey, and she made arrangements to transfer the administration of both estates, Kolpino and Zabelja, to

my father, who adored his mother. He remained at his post as a judge, but to his official duties were now added new worries of managing the estates of his mother.

In the summer of 1867, my father's first-born son died of meningitis. He was just three years old, and a smart little fellow. At the same time, Adela began to run a slight fever in the morning, coughing, and complaining of a pain in her chest. My father was alarmed, and doctors were called. They diagnosed that Adela had tuberculosis and advised her to go south.

My father took a leave of absence, and, leaving his little daughter Nussia with the sister of his wife, Emilia-Paulina Juriewicz, in Kolpino, he took his wife to Odessa, to the house of Stanislaw Juriewicz. The journey was made by carriage and lasted a couple of weeks. Adela was exhausted from this trip, and by the time they arrived in Odessa it became apparent that she could not last long...

Within two months, Adela died in the arms of her husband. Her last wish was to be buried in the family crypt in Kolpino, next to her infant son, Albert-Carl-Johann. Her body was placed in a metal coffin, hermetically sealed, and my father, with this gruesome reminder of his sorrow, started on the long journey north.

Less than a year later, my grandmother, Anna von Wrangell, died in Odessa, and her coffin was also brought to Kolpino to be buried in the family vault. A few months later, my father received the sad news that his uncle and former guardian, Stanislaw Juriewicz, had died in Berszada.

In spite of his youth, my father was desperate with grief. The three persons whom he loved the most, his wife, his mother, and his uncle, had passed away in rapid succession, leaving him alone with his daughter Nussia, only three years old.



## THE SALE OF ALASKA

### CHAPTER VIII

On the 30th of March, 1867, the sale of Alaska by Russia was signed by Baron Stoekl, Russian Ambassador, and William Seward, American Secretary of State, in Washington, D.C. This treaty was ready for delivery to the U.S. Senate for ratification.

In October of the same year, transfer of Alaska to the United States took place in New Archangel (Sitka). The white flag with St. Andrew's Cross was lowered slowly over the farthest outpost of the Russian Empire, and the Stars and Stripes were raised, the ceremony having been accompanied by a salute of the guns on Castle Hill.

For years some liberal groups in the United States had been trying at all costs to create a hostile attitude of the American people towards the Imperial Russian government. These groups explained the sale of Alaska by Russia in their own way. Their usual explanation was that Russia sold Alaska for badly needed cash, which explanation was without foundation. The sum of \$ 7,200,000.00 received by Russia was much too small to have any effect on Russian finances, and even the Soviet Marxist historians point out that the Russian Imperial government could have gotten twice that much from Great Britain.

Another explanation was based on the assumption that the Russian government was unaware at that time of the rich mineral deposits, including gold, that were found in Alaska shortly after the sale took place. This explanation was also without foundation, because the Russian govern-

ment and the directors of the Russian-American Company were aware of the extreme richness of Alaska's mineral deposits. Mr. Alexandre Tarsaidze wrote in his book, « Czars and Presidents », as follows:

« As early as 1848 a mining engineer by the name of Doroshin had discovered deposits there of limestone, marble, graphite, coal and gold. In 1885, a vein of gold was opened, and a small shipment sent to San Francisco. But, the Russians had no way of exploiting these resources. Having at their disposal insufficient ships, money and trained engineers, both the Russian government and the Russian-American Company had no choice but to remain silent about their Alaskan treasure; any hint of which would bring not only an army of foreigners with shovels, but an army of enemy soldiers. Had Alaska still been a possession of Russia at the time of the Klondike gold rush, the horde of Americans who swept north would have either driven the Russians out or caused such friction as to make a war inevitable between the two countries ».

There was a strong opposition in Russia to the sale of Alaska, and only the absolute power of the Czar made the sale possible.

~~The appraisal of the fair price that Russia could expect~~  
*SAME OPPOSITION TO THE PURCHASE OF ALASKA EXISTED*  
in the United States. Americans called it « Seward's Folly » and the United States Senate at first refused to appropriate the necessary sum of money to pay for « Seward's Icebox » as some senators called Alaska at that time.

The appraisal of the fair price that Russia could expect to get for Alaska was made by Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell (of the family branch Lagena), a former Governor-General of Alaska. To the figure of \$ 7,000,000.00 were added a couple of hundred thousand dollars of exchange fees, and the final price reluctantly ratified and appropriated by the American Congress was \$ 7,200,000.00.

The sale of Alaska cemented still further the friendly relations which existed between the Czarist Russian government and the United States.

In the same years of 1867, on June 19th, the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian of Mexico was executed at Queretaro.

Under the influence of his wife, a Belgian princess, the Austrian Archduke agreed, unwillingly, to take part in the adventurous schemes of Napoleon III, and accepted in 1863 the Crown of Mexico, offered to him by the Mexican National Assembly. Maximilian was sincere in his desire to serve his new country faithfully and worked incessantly for the welfare of his subjects. But with the victory of the northern states in the Civil War, the scheme of the French Emperor to regain the parts of Alabama and Mississippi ceded by France to Great Britain in the XVIII century, and Louisiana, sold by Napoleon I to the United States in 1803, failed. The French troops were forced to evacuate Mexico, and victorious Juarez, defeating the Imperial forces, captured Maximilian and his generals at Queretaro. Four days later the ill-fated monarch faced a firing squad. The news of her husband's execution was such a shock to Empress Charlotte that she became insane. She died in 1925.

The execution of a brother of the Austrian Emperor made a profound impression in Europe. The death on a guillotine of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoniette at the time of the French Revolution aroused great indignation throughout Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte then marched with his army from one end of Europe to the other, bringing war, devastation and deprivation to every European country. Finally, he was defeated, and order restored.

And, now, an assassination of a brother of the most benevolent and liberal European ruler, who was very popular among his own subjects, and had behind him centuries-old traditions of the Holy Empire!

Europe was shocked!

In 1848, Emperor Franz-Josef, at that time only eighteen years old, granted a constitution to Austria-Hungary, and afterward his popularity increased steadily. His marriage to a beautiful Bavarian princess who had always been tired of the pomp of the imperial etiquette, but who had won the hearts of her subjects by her kindness and beauty, only increased his popularity. The Emperor Franz-Josef and Empress Elisabeth succeeded in creating a brilliant Empire

out of a conglomeration of all kinds of people and races, so different in temperament, languages and cultural traditions. There was a happy life in Austria-Hungary during their reign. All subjects of Emperor Franz-Josef, disregarding their class distinction, race or religion, enjoyed security, respect and a happy existence, and it was reflected in the music of that period — the light and gay operettas and the immortal waltzes of Johann Strauss.

My father knew Vienna and the happy frame of mind and carefree gaiety of the Viennese. As a young student of Heidelberg University, he used to visit Prince and Princess Hohenlohe, close friends of his uncle and guardian, Stanislaw Juriewicz, and had an opportunity to get a glimpse of the brilliant Viennese court. He remembered Johann Strauss when the famous composer visited Russia, and was directing his orchestra in the beautiful gardens of Pavlovsk. Unfortunately for Strauss, a Russian Grand Duchess fell in love with him, and Strauss was advised to leave Russia.

... And, now, it was not Juarez who had ordered the execution of Maximilian but the scheming Napoleon III who was universally condemned for the murder.

Nevertheless, the prestige of the French Emperor stood very high. Too many people were made to believe that Napoleon III was just as brilliant on the field of battle as was his late uncle. A new machine-gun, the mitrailleuse, from which much was expected, was introduced in the French army, and this army appeared invincible! Only Moltke and Bismarck knew the real fighting capacity and capability of the French armed forces. The officers were badly trained, the storehouses which were supposed to be full of ammunition were actually empty, the soldiers were poorly equipped, inefficiency and corruption reigned in all government departments. The Prussian high command had no illusions about the military talents of the nephew of the « Little Corporal ».

After the collapse of many of his plans, the French Emperor got the idea that to restore his prestige he needed a victorious war, and in the spring of 1870, he declared war on Prussia.

After French troops suffered defeat at Reichshoffen, Napoleon III, under the influence of Empress Eugenie,

decided on an offensive, which ended in Sedan. On September 2, 1870, Napoleon III surrendered with 80,000 men, and on the 4th day of September, the Empire fell.

In the spring of 1871, in besieged Paris, a commune was organized. The Prussians did not want to ruin the city and were trying to capture Paris by a long siege. After the Communists had no food left and were forced to eat rats, the city capitulated. The first act of the Prussian king was to bring food to the starving Parisians.

In 1871, Communism, the ugly doctrine inspired by envy and blind hatred, made its first appearance in Europe. But it did not last, and was wiped out by the Third Republic with ultra-bourgeois ideas. The Prussians held negotiations with Thiers and Gambetta representing the French Republic.

In Paris, a union of all German States was proclaimed and the German Empire was formed. The victorious King of Prussia assumed the title of Emperor of Germany.

This war turned over another page in the history of Europe.

At the very beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, my father expressed doubts about French victory. His remarks were not based on his knowledge or his conviction — he was not interested in politics — but were prompted by his desire to contradict some elderly people around him who professed to know much about the international situation and predicted a speedy victory for the French Emperor. These people brushed my father aside, declaring that the young man did not know what he was talking about.

The news of capitulation at Sedan and the subsequent collapse of the French empire left these people speechless, and my father's reputation as a keen student of international affairs was established.

My father went through a very sad period of his life when in rapid succession he lost his infant son, his wife, his mother and his uncle. Fortunately for him, he was young and physically healthy and strong. He could not remain depressed for any length of time. He was full of « joie de vivre » and his natural jovial disposition did not permit him to brood over his sorrows for long.

He moved out of Reblio, where everything reminded him of his happiness with Adela, and established his office as well as his residence in Kolpino. Kolpino's house was larger and more comfortable, and the same old Pani Wessoczinska remained the housekeeper. Pani Wessoczinska had already been the housekeeper of Kolpino at the time when this estate belonged to my father's grandmother, Anna Deszpót-Zienowicz. Nobody knew her exact age, but she remembered well Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and continued to carry on her belt all the keys of the cellars and storerooms of Kolpino. For her, my father was still the same Stas, who as a little boy used to get some extra mazurki and other cookies from her.

In Kolpino, Emilia-Paulina Juriewicz, my father's cousin and sister-in-law, was acting as mistress of the house. Nussia, the little daughter of my father, did not remember her mother, and called her aunt « Mama ». Emilia-Paulina loved her niece as though she were her own child.

My father's time was much occupied by his official duties as a judge. Also, he was much in demand socially.

When the neighboring landowners arranged a trap-shooting and everybody shot clay pigeons, my father, as he was known in the district as an expert marksman, was given a handicap to shoot silver coins in the air, and he usually won the pot.

He received invitations from the neighboring gentry to attend every big hunt, when a battue of wolves was arranged, or a bear was found in his lair. Every such hunt was followed by a dinner that lasted for hours. After dinner, dances were arranged for the young people.

My father never drank any hard liquor or wine. It was really remarkable how he managed to abstain from liquor when in every house in Russia and Poland at that time, vodka, cognac, and wines were served with every meal.

On the other hand, my father was very susceptible to feminine charms. Red-haired, tall, well-built, with a classical profile of a well-proportioned head, he exercised an irresistible charm over every woman around him. Disregarding their social standing, married women as well as young debutantes, ladies of society as well as pretty chambermaids, they all



*Stanislaw von Wrangeli,  
father of the author.*





could not resist temptation and were willing to bestow their attention and lavish their Love upon him. He attracted them all, and they spoiled him.

He was a clever judge, and in a short time became very popular in his district. In 1874, he was appointed President of the Council of Justices of the Peace of the District of Lutzen. The jurisdiction of the council extended over the entire province, and all important cases were decided at its sessions. An appeal could have been made only to the Court of Appeal (Cassation Department) of the Senate, the highest judicial tribunal of the Empire.

Old judges erudite by many years of experience were members of the Council of Justices of the Peace, and their president was a man only thirty years old! It was a brilliant career.

My father liked to walk alone through the fields and forests. He liked nature and the beautiful countryside of northern Belorussia. One afternoon he was walking along the «Goulbitsche», as it was always called by the local peasants — a wide path with pine and birch trees growing on both sides — that led from Kolpino's park over the hilly countryside to the nearest forest. Roots of old trees crossed the path here and there. On both sides of the path were meadows and fields, now bare. It was early spring and the air was sharp. The snow had already melted, leaving only thawing patches in the hollows between the fields and under the trees.

My father was walking leisurely, inhaling the brisk spring air deeply into his lungs. He stopped at a high point of «Goulbitsche». From this hill there was a beautiful view of Kolpino's old park, with its enormous trees, on the family cemetery on a hill nearby, and fields and meadows, surrounded by forests. About three-quarters of a mile away, one could see a wide public road which crossed the estate, going around the park and all buildings in a great semicircle. This road connected Post Station Linetz on the State Highway St. Petersburg-Vitebsk, and Lakoushi, a large village with a Russian Orthodox Church, on the other side of the estate, about four miles from Kolpino.

A couple of workmen sent by the superintendent were

cleaning « Goulbitsche » from brushwood and fallen branches. Suddenly one turned to my father and said:

« Look, Pan, (in Polish, Lord), it looks like a bear got out of his den ».

My father looked in the direction the workman was pointing, and on the public road where it turned sharply at the bottom of a hill onto a bridge built across a brook, he saw a brown bear. The animal was not large, and evidently had just come from its den where it had slept through the winter, because the poor beast was very thin, and its fur hung down, practically touching the ground, while it walked aimlessly in the mud of the road.

My father sent one workman immediately to the house to get a gun, and with the other workman slowly walked straight across the fields and meadows to the place where they had seen the bear. My father realized that something was wrong because the beast continued walking aimlessly on the road. When they came nearer, they saw that it was not a bear, but someone in a « daha » (a coat with fur on the outside), walking on all fours. The thick fur collar of the coat was raised and completely covered the face of the man who wore a fur cap as well as the « daha ».

By this time the workman who had been sent for a gun came running, followed by several curious people, mostly women and children. They all helped the man stand up on his feet, and were speechless when they recognized him to be the Russian priest, Odintzov, from Lakoushi. The priest was completely drunk.

Evidently, riding down the hill on a bumpy road, he was thrown out of his small wagon and had been lying on the road for some time. Then he sobered up a little, and tried in vain to get up, but his feet and arms sank in the mud.

In a little while Matoushka, the wife of the priest, arrived. She had become alarmed when the horse brought home an empty wagon, and immediately decided to ride back and find her husband, who had left early that morning to to give Communion to a dying man who lived near Linetz.

Matoushka was not mistaken. She found her husband drunk, covered with mud, and surrounded by a crowd which

became silent at her approach. Mrs. Odintzov saw my father standing on the side of the road, and went straight to him. She fell on her knees.

« Please, please, Your Honor, forgive him! Do not denounce him to the authorities! Our very lives depend on your generosity », pleaded the woman.

My father made a wry face. He disliked intensely to see people kneeling before him, especially a woman. He moved to help her to get up, and turned away from her. He did not belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, and the conduct of the Russian priest concerned him very little. On the other hand, he was a judge of this precinct and was expected to uphold the law and order.

The poor woman continued to beg for mercy. My father was repelled by the entire affair, and in order to get rid of her, promised not to notify the proper authorities about the conduct of her husband. Mrs. Odintzov tried to kiss his hand, but my father evaded her.

The workmen helped her load the priest on the wagon. The boys found the chalice and other vessels in the mud; evidently they had fallen out of the wagon at the same time as the priest.

People kept silent, and only Matoushka tried to talk. She was obviously very much embarrassed. Finally she got into her wagon, with her drunken husband sleeping peacefully in the back, and started home.

My father walked pensively along the road, trying to forget the whole thing. At that time he did not know what disagreeable consequences this incident would have for him in the near future.

## THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

### CHAPTER IX

Emilia-Paulina Juriewicz was one of many women who were in love with my father. With other women, the infatuation was not serious, but in Emilia's case, it was different.

Emilia had been secretly in love with my father from the very moment she had met him years before, and had suffered a great deal while her cousin courted and finally married her older sister. Emilia had a deep loyalty to her sister, and was careful not to show her real feelings, but when Adela passed away, and Nussia was entrusted to her care, she became determined to win her cousin's affections.

With the cunning ingenuity of a woman in love, she started her attack. She poured all her love and affection on Nussia, whom my father adored. She replaced her mother, making herself indispensable. My father was very grateful to her; like all men, he dreaded the responsibility of bringing up a girl. Also, Emilia was placed in the position of mistress of Kolpino, and she took full advantage of it. She presided at the head of a long table, trying to look her best, always cheerful, always in a good mood.

And yet my father was far from falling in love with her. It was Nussia who tipped the scales in her favor. She had developed a genuine affection for her aunt who took such excellent care of her, and, in his desire to see his little daughter happy, my father finally decided to marry his belle-soeur.

They were married in the Kolpino's family chapel in 1875, and in 1876 Emilia gave birth to a boy, whom they named Woldemar-Constantin. The following year, Emilia gave birth to a daughter, who was named Adela. In these first two years of their married life they were comparatively happy, although my father was aware of the differences in their mentality.

Emilia Juriewicz had not gone to any school; she had received her education at home. At that time, the most important aspect of the education of a girl was her manners and also ability to carry on conversation in a drawingroom. She was supposed to dance well and to know something about music. The French language was a 'must' but that was practically all that was required from a young debutante. Emilia never read a book... her knowledge of geography, history and other subjects was extremely limited. Her ideas of life were well-balanced, and practical, but rather naïve. After his infatuation with Emilia subsided, my father found the company of his wife quite boring.

At the same time, Emilia wanted to exercise fully her rights and privileges of a wife, expecting from her husband continuous attention and signs of affection. At the end of two years my father became not only completely indifferent to her, but grew to actually dislike her. Emilia was very unhappy and cried a lot. Her demanding attitude and her lack of understanding caused him to care less and less for her. They drifted apart until finally they became complete strangers, yet Emilia was tenaciously hanging on to her prerogatives as a wife — at that time, divorces were not looked upon favorably.

They continued to live in the big Kolpino house, occupying separate quarters, and met only in the diningroom when meals were served, or when it was necessary to entertain their guests. It was a very trying and unhappy period in my father's life. He was lonely, being estranged even from his own children, because in her desire to win their sympathy, Emilia influenced them against their father. It was one of the reasons that led my father to the decision to place Nussia, at the age of twelve, in the Smolny Institute in St. Petersburg. Smolny was a well-known government school for girls of nobility, with strict discipline and

firm traditions. For Nussia it was the greatest change in her young life.

Being preoccupied with his personal affairs, my father did not follow the international events which aroused a great deal of interest among Russian intelligentsia at that time.

In 1876, the uprising of the Serbs against the Turks in Herzegovina was followed by the uprising of the Bulgarians. The sympathies of Russian intelligentsia were on the side of Christian Slavs who were trying to overthrow the yoke of the Moslem Turks.

The Slavophiles were very active among all groups of Russian society. Their idea of uniting all the Slavs under the sceptre of the Russian Czar received tacit approval in government circles, and many officers of the Imperial Guards were resigning from their regiments to join the Serbian army as volunteers. Collections for hospitals and medical supplies were made at the fashionable charity balls and bazaars in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Russian newspapers were publishing communiqués from the fighting front on their front pages; these communiqués were considered the most important news of the day.

Czar Alexander II was not a Slavophil, and did not approve of Slavophil aims and ideas. He realized that the Russian Empire consisted of many different nationalities and races, and that the Slavonic population of the Empire, including Poles, hardly exceeded seventy percent of all his subjects.

In the year 989, Russia received Christianity from the Byzantine Empire, and the Russian Prince Vladimir, who invited Byzantine clergy to Kiev to baptize his subjects in the Dnieper River, became a Saint of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian alphabet with thirty-six letters created at that time by two Bulgarian monks was based on the Greek alphabet.

In 1224, the hordes of Genghis-Khan invaded Russia. Russian troops and European medieval knighthood were no match for the Mongolian divisions. Sitting on big chargers, both man and horse covered by heavy armor, the knights were much too clumsy to move quickly. Their strategy was

simple: always a frontal attack, the knights acting like tanks trying to break the enemy's front line. Their men followed on horse and on foot. The knights never retreated — they considered that it was a sign of defeat.

The Mongol divisions, sitting on light, fast ponies, introduced a war of maneuver, a war of movements, unknown at that time in Europe. At the battle of Budapest (1241) the flower of European knighthood was practically annihilated by the Mongols.

In 1240, the second invasion of Europe by the Mongols under Batu-Khan took place, and Russia was completely subdued. The Mongol rule of Russia lasted two hundred and fifty years, and only in 1480, Ivan III, Grand Duke of Moscow, threw off the Mongol yoke. During these two hundred and fifty years, Mongol and Tatar words were adopted in the Russian language and the Russian people acquired many traits and characteristics of the Asiatics. Mongolian and Tatar aristocracy, including some direct descendants of Genghis-Khan, became closely intermarried with Russian aristocracy and for centuries had been prominent members of St. Petersburg and Moscow society. Practically every Russian had some Tatar blood in his veins, and was proud of it, too!

After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow married Princess Sophia, a niece of Constantine Palaeologus, the last of the Greek Emperors, and proclaimed himself the sole heir to the eastern part of the Roman Empire. At that time the black Double Eagle of the Roman Legions became the Russian national emblem.

Grand Duke Ivan IV, better known as Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584), accepted the title of Caesar, which was abbreviated in Russia to « Czar », and ever since then, all Russian Sovereigns considered themselves as the heirs and successors to the Byzantine Emperors.

The Russian Empress Catherine II (1762-1796) named her second grandson Constantine, anticipating a great event of his being installed as the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople. Grand Duke Constantine, a brother of Czar Alexander I, was taught to speak and write Greek fluently.

And now the Slavophiles proclaimed their aim to replace the Moslem Crescent with an Orthodox Cross on the Aya-Sophia mosque in Constantinople!

On the other hand, all western Slavonic people, including Poles, received Christianity from Rome. Their alphabets were based on the Latin alphabet, and for centuries western Slaves had been under the cultural influence of the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church.

Czar Alexander II realized only too well that the European Slavs, like Croats, Slovaks, Czechs, Carpatho-Russians and Poles had an entirely different cultural background, and were actually strangers to Russians, while Uzbeks, Kalmucks, Kirghis, Tatars and other Turko-Mongolian tribes were much nearer to the masses of the Russian people.

The Czar realized that any attempt to unite all Slavonic peoples under his sceptre would inevitably be opposed with force by all European powers, and by the same Slavs who had been accustomed for centuries to a European way of life, and appeared to be quite content under the Austrian rule. The Polish uprisings of 1831 and 1863 took place only in that part of Poland which belonged to Russia, and did not spread to Polish provinces of the Austrian and German Empires. Russians, with their half-Byzantine and half-Asiatic conceptions and ways of life were foreign to the cultured Poles.

It is necessary to admit that, through many centuries, Russia received a heritage of purely ideological nature from the former Byzantine Empire. However, as to the territorial aspect of Russia, she reached geographical limits of the Empire of Genghis-Khan and his son Batu, the founder of the Golden Horde. These geographical limits were reached by sheer necessity, and so Russia acquired the shores of the Baltic Sea and approached the Carpathian Mountains in the west, and the shores of the Black Sea in the south, in order to expand the Empire to its natural geographical borders which were easier to defend, and which gave Russia an outlet to the sea.

In their new acquisitions, the Russian Czars did not follow the ethnological principle of conquering territories populated exclusively by Slavonic people. As a matter of fact,



the population of new territories acquired by the Czars was not Slavonic in origin — Finns and Esthonians were of Mongolian extraction, Letts and Lithuanians of Ancient Arian, but not of Slavonic origin, and in the south, Crimean Tatars and some fifty different tribes and nations of Cuasasian Mountains — all of them having their own language, their own religion, customs, and traditions, all different, and none even distantly related to Slavs.

All territories acquired by Russia in Europe as well as in Asia — the Uzbek and Kirghis steppes northeast of the Black Sea, Russian Turkestan and Moslem Khanates of Kokand (later renamed «Ferghana Territory»), Bokhara and Khiva in Central Asia, the farflung Ussuri Territory and the lands along the banks of Amur River, Sakhalin Island on the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk, Kamchatka, and the shores of the Pacific — all of them became integral parts of the Russian Empire, and all Turko-Mongolian tribes and races of these distant lands and territories proved to be loyal subjects of the «White Czar», the name they called their Russian Sovereign.

And, not ideologically but in reality, Russian Czars were the heirs and successors of the Great Mongol.

The importance of the Czars in restoring peace, and introducing European culture to the natives of Asia was much greater than the role they could possibly have played as purely Slavonic rulers. And Czar Alexander II was a benevolent sovereign of a great Empire, striving incessantly for the welfare of all his subjects, with no preference for any one group.

It would have been very advantageous for Russia to acquire the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. From a strategic point of view, it was much easier to defend the entrance to the Black Sea than to defend the great extent of its shores. The closing of the straits to Russian shipping, as happened during the Crimean War, caused losses to Russian trade that ran into many millions of gold Roubles. However, it was even more important for Russia to find an outlet to an open sea from the regions of Turkestan and the Altai Mountains. This region had the richest deposits of copper and other metals, and could not have been developed

without access to the open sea. The cost of a pound of copper transported from Central Asia to European Russia by railroads was prohibitively high, much higher than the price of a pound of the same metal brought from Canada by ship. On account of the lack of water transportation, the fabulous wealth of Central Asia was condemned to remain undeveloped.

In trying to find a solution to the question of the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, it would have been a big step forward for Russia if European powers had agreed to declare Constantinople a free port, but even for that Russia could not hope, and any Russian territorial claims in the Balkans only complicated matters and were bound to lead Russia into war with European powers. The great Russian Czar-Emancipator was not looking for war. Under pressure of public opinion, inspired by Slavophiles, the Czar proceeded very carefully, and proposed a cooperative action in the Balkans to all European powers.

Since 1874, Disraeli had been in power in England. Following an imperialist policy, he had bought the Suez Canal, and had made Queen Victoria Empress of India. He showed the traditional British jealousy of Russia's advance in Asia. Disraeli stated clearly that England would not permit Russia to threaten the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The Czar realized the apprehension of the British government concerning Russia's getting into the Mediterranean and menacing the lifeline of the British empire, the shortest way to India. He was forced to turn to Austria-Hungary.

It was officially announced that he had gone to Austria for a rest, and on the 8th day of July, 1876, he met « incidentally » Emperor Franz-Josef at Reichstadt. Here, the two monarchs worked out and signed an agreement in which all possibilities of victory, defeat and a collapse of the Ottoman Empire were foreseen. Austria was to remain neutral, but friendly to Russia, and was to receive Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia was to receive the part of Bessarabia lost after the Crimean War. In case Bulgaria's independence was established, no Russian prince was to ascend the Bulgarian throne. This agreement of Reichstadt was confirmed in Budapest in January, 1877, and implemented in Vienna in March of the same year.

Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Czar Alexander found it necessary to make a definite statement to the British Ambassador that Russia was not seeking any gain for itself, and intended only to protect the «brother Slavs» in the Balkans. Lord Derby, British Minister for Foreign Affairs, acknowledged approvingly the statements of the Czar and invited the European powers to a conference at Constantinople. As a result, they came to an agreement by which Serbia and Montenegro were to receive their independence and some additional territory from Turkey; Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina were to receive autonomy under Christian governors appointed by Turkey and approved by the European powers.

However, the Turkish Great Council unanimously refused to appoint Christian governors for these provinces. By that time, the feeling in Russia had reached a boiling point, and on April 24, 1877, Russia declared war on Turkey.

Crossing the Danube near Sistova, Russian troops advanced on the Balkans. They pushed their way over the Shipka Pass, where they were only two day's march from Adrianopol, but Osman Pasha with his troops, unperceived by the Russians, marched from Vidim, and entrenched himself around Plevna, a Turkish fortress which was in path of the Russian advance. In spite of vigorous Russian attacks, Plevna withstood a long siege.

Russian soldiers wondered why they should be ordered from the remote parts of the empire to fight for the sake of the liberation of Bulgarians and Serbs. They did not have any friendly feelings toward these «little brothers» as Russian intelligentsia used to call the Slavonic people of the Balkans, and, contrary to the public opinion in Russia, they liked the Turks. They had great respect for the courage of the Turkish soldiers, and a warm feeling towards this enemy on account of a friendly attitude displayed by the Turks regarding their prisoners. Captured Russian soldiers were immediately invited by Turkish soldiers to share their food with them, and to eat out of the same big pot their pilave, a Turkish dish made of rice with fat and lamb in it. In spite of the difference of religion and language, there was a certain strong affinity between the soldiers of these two Empires.

After a long siege, Plevna was finally captured and the road to Constantinople was opened. In the Eastern theater, advancing from Caucasus, Russian troops under the command of Grand Duke Michail Nicholayevitch, a brother of the Czar, captured Kars and the fortress of Erzerum. It was the most brilliant action of the war. Russian troops were only about sixty miles from Constantinople when the British Fleet entered the Sea of Marmora. At this point, Sultan Abdul Hamid made an appeal to Queen Victoria, and the Queen telegraphed the Czar, asking him to stop. The Czar agreed, and on January 31, 1878, an armistice was concluded at Adrianopol.

The treaty of San Stefano, signed by Turkey on March 3, 1878, created a semi-independent principality of Bulgaria, with the annexation of a large Turkish territory. The Ottoman Empire even lost Adrianopol. Disregarding the agreement of Reichstadt, the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed. In the East, the provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Bayazid were given to Russia. Dobrudscha was to be given to Romania in exchange for a part of Bessarabia, which she would cede to Russia.

A peace treaty was signed, and the war was over.

## THE ASSASSINATION OF CZAR ALEXANDER II

### CHAPTER X

European powers refused to approve the conditions of the Treaty of San Stefano, and insisted that this treaty signed by Russia and Turkey would be revised at a congress of all European powers.

In order to protect the interests of Turkey, Great Britain concluded a defensive alliance with Turkey on the 4th of June of the same year. The European powers agreed to revise the Treaty of San Stefano at a congress in Berlin. Prince Bismarck, Grand Chancellor of Germany, volunteered to act as intermediary between the great powers. To use his own words, he promised to act as an «honest broker».

Because of Russia's friendly attitude towards Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which led to the creation of the German Empire, the Russian government and Russian public opinion expected Bismarck to be grateful to Russia and to defend the terms of the San Stefano's Treaty, but Bismarck preferred to remain strictly neutral.

Austria-Hungary reminded Russia of the agreement of Reichstadt. At the last moment, Prince Gorchakoff, Russian plenipotentiary at the congress, succeeded in persuading Austria-Hungary not to insist on the immediate annexation of these two provinces. The point was that the Treaty of Reichstadt was kept secret in Russia, although it was made public in Western Europe. Consequently, public opinion in Russia was not prepared for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. Due to the efforts of Prince

Gorchakoff, the Habsburg Empire agreed to get Bosnia and Herzegovina for the time being only « for occupation and administration ».

Great Britain also reminded Russia of her promises made prior to the outbreak of war, and in consequence, Russia's gains were reduced to almost nothing. Russia lost direct control over the newly created Bulgaria, and Turkey appointed a German prince, Alexander von Battenberg, to become the Bulgarian ruler. The territory of Bulgaria was considerably reduced, and Adrianopol was returned to Turkey as well as the Province of Bayazid in Asia Minor, which had been ceded to Russia.

Russian enthusiasm for fighting cooled off considerably after this war. However, not only the Slavophiles, but Russians of different political groups felt that the sacrifices of the Russian Army during the war justified material gains for Russia. Prince Gorchakoff, signing the final draft of the treaty in Berlin for Russia, admitted that it was the most humiliating moment of his life.

The Russian government had not made public the previous promises given by the Czar to Austria and to Great Britain, and public opinion in Russia promptly blamed the German Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, for the disappointing results of the Congress in Berlin. Ivan Aksakov, a well-known Slavophile, not being well informed concerning all the facts, made a public speech in Moscow denouncing Russian diplomacy. The general discontent in Russia was so great that the government found it necessary to banish Aksakov from Moscow.

Strange as it may seem, public opinion in Russia eventually absolved Great Britain from any blame — the power that actually intervened and stopped the Russian approach to the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Russian intelligentsia became decidedly hostile to Germany and Austria. It was then that the seeds for the First World War were planted.

The Ottoman Empire was spread at that time on three continents — Europe, Asia, and Africa, with mostly Mohammedans in their Asiatic and African provinces. Only in Syria, about fifty percent of the population was Christian.



*Princess Catherine Jurievsky (Jourievsky),  
the second, morganatic wife of Czar Alexander II.*





The Turks forbade ringing of the bells in Christian churches, and in Syria the church bells remained silent. At the personal request of the Czar, the Turks were made to remove this ban, and for the first time in many centuries, the poor people heard the ringing of their church bells. It was an act of grace on the part of the « White Czar » to the Arabic population of a far-off province of the Ottoman Empire.

Czar Alexander II was an exceedingly well-educated man. His father, Czar Nicholas I, did everything possible to give his son an excellent education. The most advanced and talented professors, among them a well-known Russian poet, Zhukowsky, author of the Russian national hymn, were teachers of the young Cesarevitch. By nature, Czar Alexander II was generous and good-hearted. He ascended the throne with the intention of giving Russia a series of reforms and going so far as granting a constitutional form of government to the Russian people. At the end of his life, he was inclined more than ever to be forgiving and magnanimous. He was going through a period of strong personal emotions — he was in love!

A few years prior to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Czar happened to visit one of his friends, Prince Michael Dolgoruky, a scion of one of the oldest Russian noble families, a descendent of Rurik, and by chance met his young daughter, Princess Catherine.

In his early fifties, the Czar was a man of enormous charm. An aura of an autocrat who was gracious enough to grant freedom to millions of people surrounded his personality. In his presence, all people felt themselves elated. No wonder the young Catherine was impressed!

Her beauty, her outward frankness, and her quick replies full of respectful humor, made an impression on the Czar. At this first meeting, a certain affinity was established between them.

Since 1841, the Czar had been happily married to Empress Maria Alexandrovna, née Princess of Hesse and Rhine. After some thirty years of marriage, during which she had given birth to seven children, the Empress became ill and could not take part in official ceremonies, innumerable receptions and the travels of her husband. Gradually, the

Czar became accustomed to attending all official functions and receptions alone.

The Czar and Princess Catherine met again and again, and in spite of the considerable difference in age, they fell in love with each other. They were so much in love that after parting in the evening they wrote letters to each other to be delivered by special messengers early the following morning. And, they were writing to each other every single night! In these letters they initiated each other into the innermost recesses of their hearts and souls. Both of them were enthusiastically inspired by a desire to bring welfare and happiness to their people.

Empress Maria Alexandrovna knew about their romance, although the Czar had become exceedingly gentle and kind to her, and she resigned herself to the role of a deserted wife.

On May 28, 1880, the Empress died, and about a month later, on July 6th, the Czar married Princess Catherine Dolgoruky, and she became his morganatic wife under the name of Princess Jurievsky. The children of the Czar and Princess Catherine were authorized to carry the name and title of their mother.

The Czar intended to crown his second wife as Empress of Russia and was only waiting for the opposition of his own family to subside. He remarked casually that the Dolgoruky family had more right to the Russian throne than the Romanoff family, referring to the direct ancestor of his second wife, Prince Youri Dolgoruky, who in the XII century was ruler of Russia.

Russian people at large were not aware of the second marriage of their sovereign, but St. Petersburg society was all excited, and speculated — would Princess Jurievsky become Empress of Russia, or not? A marriage of the Russian autocrat to one of his own subjects would inevitably lead to an undesirable situation of one Russian family, in this case the Princes Dolgoruky, becoming of great importance, being so close to the throne. In order to avoid this situation, all European rulers, by well-established custom, usually married foreign princesses, and now the Czar was ready to break this tradition. The opposition to his marriage from his own family was felt very strongly, and the Czar was forced to bide his time.



*Princess Catherine Dolgoruky,  
morganatic wife of Czar Alexander II*



In his desire to give Russia a more liberal form of government, the Czar created the Supreme Commission of Administration which exercised a certain control over the members of the Cabinet. At the head of the Supreme Commission, the Czar appointed General Count Loris-Melikoff, who was entrusted with the formidable task of outlining a new constitution. St. Petersburg society witnessed with astonishment that all official functions were conducted with Count Loris-Melikoff following the Czar, ahead of all members of the Imperial family, including the Cesarevitch. It was contrary to the court etiquette, and in social circles, Loris-Melikoff was called « the Walking Constitution ».

But, in spite of the evident intention of the Czar to grant a constitutional form of government to Russia, attempts on his life became even more frequent. On February 17, 1880, a time bomb exploded in a cellar of the Winter Palace. Directly above, on the ground floor, was a large hall where a company of an infantry regiment had its quarters, and directly above that, on the second floor, was a diningroom where on that day a lunch for the Imperial family and their guest, Prince Alexander von Battenberg, was to be served.

Fortunately, there was a snow storm that morning, and the train that was bringing the Prince to St. Petersburg was late. The Imperial party had not yet entered the diningroom when the explosion occurred. Many soldiers on the ground floor were killed or wounded, but the diningroom was not damaged; only the plates and silver rattled on the dining table.

Whoever had planned this assassination had not taken into consideration the peculiar construction of the Winter Palace. Not only did all the rooms have unusually high ceilings, but between the ceiling and the floor above was a space of about five feet. The force of the explosion was not sufficient to reach the diningroom on the second floor.

A search was made of all rooms, halls and apartments of the palace. It was not an easy task because the size of the Winter Palace was eighty-four million cubic feet. The palace was fourteen hundred feet long, and if it had stood on end it would have been higher than the Empire State Building in New York City.

All the rooms, cellars and apartments of the palace were carefully searched, and to the consternation of the Russian Secret Service, a cow was discovered in one of the rooms of the attic. It was the servants' quarters, and the cow belonged to one of the court lackeys who supplied other servants of the palace with fresh milk.

The Secret Service found the perpetrator of the crime. It was a workman by the name of Halturin, who had for weeks brought dynamite in small quantities into the Winter Palace where he was employed as a repair man. His affiliation with the « Nihilists » was established.

The government was very much alarmed, but the Czar continued to appear in public without guards, as usual. Loris-Melikoff also withstood an attack on his own life from a revolutionary whom he arrested with his own hands. Like the Czar, Loris-Melikoff was not easily frightened and continued at his post with all the energy of a georgian.

On February 9, 1881, Loris-Melikoff submitted to the Czar a plan of associating elective representatives of the people with the government in legislative work. Russia was to receive a constitutional form of government, and the revolutionaries doubled their efforts to kill the Czar. They wanted a complete abolition of the monarchy, and the proposed reform could only strengthen the existing order, increasing the popularity of the Czar.

On March 1, 1881, the Czar signed the Constitution and went to receive a review of some units of the St. Petersburg garrison at the Michailovsky Riding Hall. He had lunch at the palace of his late aunt, the Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna. The Nihilists followed his every movement. They knew that the Czar would return to the Winter Palace by one of two routes which ran parallel to each other — either via Ekatherininsky Canal, or via Moika. They placed assassins with bombs on both streets.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, the closed carriage of the Czar turned from Nevsky Prospect into Ekatherininsky Canal. A few minutes later, the first assassin stationed there threw a bomb at the carriage. The carriage was demolished but, miraculously, the Czar was not touched. He dismounted to speak to some Cossacks of his Escort

who were wounded. He spoke not unkindly to the criminal, who was arrested.

In the meantime, the assassins stationed on Moika heard the explosion and ran to the Ekatherininsky Canal. It was only one block away. With the words « It is too early to thank God! » one of them threw a second bomb between the feet of the Czar. The Czar's legs were crushed, his stomach torn open, and his handsome face terribly mutilated. He said only, « To the palace, to die there.... », and lost consciousness. He was placed in the carriage of the Governor of the City who arrived at the place of the explosion. Within a few minutes, all members of the Imperial family assembled in the room of the palace where the Czar was brought. Princess Jurievsky, with a scream of despair, threw herself on the mutilated body of the Czar, covering his disfigured face with kisses. Her tears mixed with his blood. There was no time for etiquette, there was only the grief of a young woman whose beloved husband was dying. Within an hour and a half, the Czar-Emancipator expired.

After the coffin of the Czar, with great ceremonies and thundering salute of guns, was brought to St. Peter and Paul Fortress to be buried in the mausoleum of the Russian sovereigns, and all members of the Imperial family had left the fortress church, Princess Jurievsky, heavily veiled, entered the church through a side door. She knelt and prayed at the coffin of her husband and placed a shining curl of her own hair under his hand.

On account of the opposition to the Imperial family, Princess Jurievsky moved with her children to the south of France where she died in 1922. She lived long enough to see the downfall of the dynasty of Alexander II, and the assassination of his grandson, Czar Nicholas II and his family in the cellar of Ipatiev's house in Ekatherinburg, in the far-away Ural Mountains.

## THE CZAR SLAVOPHIL

### CHAPTER XI

March 1st, 1881, according to the Julian calendar, or March 13th, according to the Gregorian calendar, was a memorable day in the life of my father, who was in St. Petersburg at the time.

He was walking leisurely along Nevsky Prospect near Sadovaya, when he saw the carriage of the Czar, followed by the Cossacks of His Majesty's Escort. The carriage turned into Ekatherininsky Canal and a few minutes later my father heard the first explosion. He saw people running, following the route of the Imperial carriage. By the time he reached the corner of Ekatherininsky Canal, there was another explosion. There was a mob of excited people. Several persons had been wounded, and others killed. He could not get any nearer because the place was already surrounded by the police.

The crowd stood silently, making the sign of the Cross; many of them had tears in their eyes. One woman next to him murmured, « They killed him, our blessed Sovereign! », and she started to cry bitterly.

My father was badly shaken. He had seen the Czar many times in his life, and remembered well his pleasant voice and the look of his large, kind eyes, penetrating deeply into the very soul of the man to whom he was talking.

My father was proud of the new reforms and of the big changes that were taking place. He was witnessing a new Russia rising out of the sombre State that Russia had been at the time of the autocratic Czar Nicholas I. Being an aristocrat loyal to the idea of monarchy, my father was



devoted, body and soul, to this benevolent sovereign who accomplished so much for his own people and for the poor people of other nations. And, at that moment he felt sinister forebodings flooding his heart. «What will happen now? Will the new czar follow the same path of liberal reforms?» My father realized that it was impossible to expect it from a son whose father was so brutally murdered! He felt that this memorable day was to be a turning point in the history of the Russian Empire. The future appeared dismal and doubtful...

The assassination of Czar Alexander II was a most hideous crime!

A small group of Nihilists took it upon themselves to decide the destiny and the needs of the great Empire. They relentlessly pursued the most philanthropic ruler of this Empire and succeeded in killing him on the very day he signed the most liberal constitution in all Russian history!

Dedicating themselves to a senseless destruction, this group had no program, no plans of their own. They did not even seek to establish themselves in power. They simply disapproved of the Czar as the symbol of the existing order, a symbol of authority, and destroyed the man who rightfully deserved the veneration of the Russian people.

Alexandre Tarsaidze, in his book «Czars and Presidents», wrote as follows:

«Historians have been guilty of propagating the popular notion that tyrants suffer violent deaths by assassination. In the true history of the world more Lincolns and Alexanders have met this fate than the Caesars. The tyrants never forget to shield themselves behind armor. But those great and affectionate rulers who truly love humanity forget that a man's sense of injustice is not confined to the actual years of his oppression».

By the end of the XIX century, Nihilism, under the name of Anarchism, became a sinister doctrine of senseless destruction in many countries. In the United States, two presidents, James Garfield in 1881, and William McKinley in 1901, were killed by anarchists. In Europe, their victims were President Carnot of France in 1894, Premier Canovas

of Spain in 1897, the beautiful Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1898, King Humbert of Italy in 1900, and many others.

After killing five French policemen with a bomb, Emile Henry, an anarchist, placed another bomb in the café Terminus at the Gare St. Lazare in Paris. This second bomb killed one person, and wounded twenty peaceful citizens who were drinking their coffee and reading their newspapers in this café. In 1893, Edouard Vaillant, another French anarchist, threw a bomb from a public gallery of the Chambre des Députés, wounding several deputies, fortunately killing none.

In 1896, in Barcelona, a bomb was thrown into a religious procession as it was entering a church, killing eleven, and wounding about forty persons. There were other similar brutal occurrences.

The deaths of all these innocent people were supposed to advance the anarchist idea! In 1894, Emile Henry went on trial, and testifying in the courtroom stated, « There are no innocent bourgeois! » From the point of view of the anarchists, all these deaths were justified.

The names of the anarchists Prince Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, Enrico Malatesta, Ravachol, Santo Caserio, Sebastian Fauré, Emma Goldman, and many others — the names of those who expounded this doctrine of violence as well as of those who actually perpetrated the crimes — appeared on the front pages of European and American newspapers.

The assassination of the Czar-Emancipator left the Russian people bewildered, suffering severe anguish. Throughout the whole Empire people were praying... their sorrow was genuine. The United States Congress unanimously passed a resolution condemning the murderers of the Czar. In this atmosphere of general mourning, Cesarevitch (1) Alexander

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(1) The correct title of the Russian Heir-Apparent was Cesarevitch, derived from Caesar, pronounced « Tsay-sa-ray-vitch ». His wife's title was « Cesarevna ». Russian terms of Czarevitch and Czarevna had been applied to the Czar's sons and daughters of the Moscow period of Russian history (XVI and XVII centuries) and were also used in Russian fairy tales.

ascended the throne under the name of Czar Alexander III.

The young Czar appointed Plehve, the head of the police, to investigate the killing of his father.

Capital punishment was abolished in Russia by the Empress Elisabeth in 1741. However, the ruling did not affect court martial proceedings, or decisions of regular criminal courts in war time. Five of the assassins, Zhelyabov, Sophia Perovsky, Kibalchich, Ryssakov and Mikhailov, those who actually took part in the plot, were executed. Grinevetsky was killed by his own bomb, and the rest of the conspirators were imprisoned and exiled to Siberia.

There remained a question of the Constitution signed by the late Czar on the day he was killed. This Constitution was not read in the Senate yet and was not published. It was entirely up to the young Czar to cancel it or to put it into effect.

Czar Alexander II was cruelly assassinated, and it appeared that his liberal policy was a failure. But the young Czar was not lacking in courage, and his personal pride, and loyalty to the memory of his father were so strong that he could have ordered the proclamation of the Constitution signed by the Czar-Emancipator. This was vigorously opposed by Constantin Pobedonostseff, a reactionary and a Slavophil, who was his tutor.

The Constitution of Czar Alexander II was never published. Count Loris-Melikoff, Abaza and Dmitri Milutin, three liberals, the Head of the Supreme Commission and two members of the Cabinet, presented their resignations.

And yet Russia remained calm. There were some isolated acts of terrorism, but the leaders of revolutionary organizations admitted that they could not find any sympathy among the people for their acts.

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All six sons of Czar Alexander II — Nicholas, Alexander, Vladimir, Alexis, Serge and Paul — were tall and very handsome. When the Czar appeared in public followed by his six sons, it was an exhibit of masculine fine race and beauty. An exception was his second son, Alexander, who was heavy and strong as a bull, but lacked the refined features of his brothers.

The oldest son, Cesarevitch Nicholas, was extremely good-looking, and had the same generous and noble character of his father. Unfortunately, he was consumptive. He was engaged to Princess Dagmar of Denmark when his illness took a turn for the worse. He was sent to France, to the sunny sea coast, where he died, and Alexander, the second son of the Czar, became Cesarevitch.

Alexander consented to marry the fiancée of his late brother. Princess Dagmar agreed, and they were married on November 28, 1866, in St. Petersburg. Princess Dagmar's name and title were changed to Cesarevna and Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna.

According to Hindu concepts, a marriage of a younger brother to the fiancée of his late brother was bound to bring bad luck. But the marriage of Alexander and Dagmar happened to be a happy one. Cesarevitch Alexander was a good family man. He was a man of enormous physical strength. He could bend a horseshoe with his bare hands. He was honest, laborious, with very clear and definite ideas, but quite limited in his outlook. His ideal was an Empire of one nationality, one language, one religion, and he adhered faithfully to two principles of the Byzantine Empire — Autocracy and Orthodoxy. He was much opposed to the liberal policy of his father, and now this man became the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias.

The most influential man during the reign of Alexander III became Constantin Pobedonostseff, Procurator of the Holy Synod, or, as he was called, « the Czar's eye » in control of the church. The sermons of preachers were subjected in advance to an ecclesiastical censorship, and country priests were required to report to the police authorities those persons in their parishes who were not « trust-worthy » from a political point of view.

Any form of dissent from the rigid Orthodoxy of the Russian Church was forbidden. The Methodists, who in Russia were called « Stundists », Baptists, and especially Dukhobors, who objected to military service, and all other sects were forbidden. Orthodoxy was enforced not only on dissenters, like « Uniats » (the Russian Orthodox who recognized the supremacy of the Pope of Rome), but on the Roman



L'EMPEREUR ALEXANDRE III.

*Czar Alexander III.*



Catholics in Poland and Lithuania, on the Lutherans in the Baltic provinces, on the Jews, and even on the Mohammedans. The government attempted a forcible conversion among the Mussulmans, and the Buddhists' places of worship of Kalmucks and Buryats were closed by government order.

Russian universities lost their autonomy and their statutes were changed. Student demonstrations and troubles broke out at the University of Kazan and St. Petersburg in 1882, and at the Universities of Moscow, Odessa and Harkov in 1887. These troubles were suppressed by troops, and usual exclusions followed.

The elective Justices of the Peace were abolished and in their place the Land Captains (Zemskiye Nachalniki) were established. These Land Captains, chosen from the poorer gentry, were placed under direct control of provincial governors. They were not representative of justice any more, but petty government officials who were ordered to supervise every detail of peasant life for the Department of Interior.

The government succeeded in a very short time in antagonizing practically all the non-Orthodox and all the non-Slavonic population of the Empire. All these people felt that they were not wanted, but only tolerated. The nobility of different dominions of the Empire, like Poland, the Baltic Provinces, Finland and Caucasus were regarded in general as «politically unreliable».

It appeared that the Russian Autocratic government was relying exclusively on the support of uneducated Russian peasants. The Slavophiles were propagating a notion that the Czar was a true father of the Russian people, and all Orthodox Russians were his children.

In the meantime, the peasants were eager to get more land. At the time of emancipation, they received about half of the cultivated and fertile land, but this land became subject to the restrictions of communal ownership. The peasants, having been freed from their noble masters, found themselves in a bondage of their own communes. They were not free!

Some of the peasants went far in search of suitable new lands, and a movement towards Siberia grew throughout this period. The government organized «The Emigration

Committee of Peasants » and the Heir-Apparent, the future Czar Nicholas II, became its president. This Committee provided financial assistance to the emigrants to move to Siberia and to settle down there, on fertile lands which were given to them free. The Czar personally contributed approximately ten million acres, which belonged to His Majesty's Office, to the emigrants.

But every farmer, regardless of his nationality, hates to move. Besides, the law did not permit any peasant to sell his famous « nadel ». A peasant did not want to lose his share of land Holdings in his own commune, and consequently was reluctant to leave European Russia.

In spite of these difficulties, the Emigration Committee succeeded in a short period of time in moving over one million peasants to Siberia, where the soil was fertile, and they soon became prosperous farmers.

This measure helped considerably, but did not solve the problem, and the cry for more land continued.

Very few of the Russian landowners operated with sufficient working capital, and a continuous shortage of necessary funds made them mortgage or sell their lands. Enterprising peasants were quite anxious to purchase these lands, and in order to help them, the « State Bank of the Peasants' » (Gosudarstvenny Khrestiansky Bank) was organized. With very small down payments, the bank financed purchases at a low interest rate (about two percent), but **the government was opposed to individual peasant property**, and would assist only the peasant communes (obschina), or the associations of peasants formed for this purpose, in purchasing the gentry's lands.

Depriving peasants of individual property, the government played naturally into the hands of socialists and communists who proposed to proclaim general socialization of all the lands of the Empire. Instead of creating a class of contented citizens, loyal to the existing form of government, this policy was to breed discontent among the same peasants.

The situation was becoming tense, and there were strong indications of an approaching uprising. These manifestations of an impending catastrophe were an excellent background for all kinds of strange and mysterious predictions of the



downfall of the Empire, and a tragic end to its ruler. Also, it was an excellent field for revolutionary propaganda.

Of course, all these changes did not materialize overnight, but within a few years Russia became an entirely different country.

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My father used to go to St. Petersburg regularly to visit Nussia at Smolny. In March, 1881, Nussia was fifteen years old. She was a tall girl and resembled her father very much — the same classical Greek profile, the same silky reddish hair — but she was quite frail. Like her mother, Nussia was inclined to be consumptive.

All girl students of Smolny adored Czar Alexander II. On the occasions of his visits to Smolny, the girls managed to steal not only the cigarettes from his cigarette case, but his handkerchiefs as well. They tore the latter into small pieces in order for every girl to have her share. Nussia kept her amulet, a small piece of the Czar's handkerchief; it was her most precious possession. This piece of fine cambric had a faint odor of expensive perfume.

After a visit by the Czar, all girls usually received bonbons and other candies delivered to them by the Department of the Imperial Court.

And, now, all the girls of Smolny were sorrowfully mourning the Czar...

One of Nussia's classmates was Princess Anastasia of Montenegro. She was one of five sisters who were students of Smolny, in different grades. They were extremely poor, but expected the other girls to share with them the expensive presents they received from their homes.

A few years after the accession to the throne of Czar Alexander III, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, father of the girls, was present at an official dinner in the Winter Palace. The Czar raised his glass to « his only friend Prince Nicholas of Montenegro! » As a matter of fact, the Czar did not care much for this man. It happened before Russia signed a secret agreement (*Entente Cordiale*) with France. Montenegro was so insignificantly small that by calling Nicholas of Montenegro « his only friend », the Czar wanted to show that he did not need any allies.

This toast made by the Czar was sufficient reason that the position of the Montenegro girls at Smolny was changed immediately to that of royalty. All teachers were instructed to ask the girls politely, «Will it please the Princess to recite her lesson today?», and the haughty princess often answered, «Niet!», and remained seated at her place in the classroom, as the attitude of the Montenegro sisters had completely changed. They became insolent and domineering, and in a short time the students of Smolny learned to dislike them intensely, with the exception of the youngest girl, Helena, the future queen of Italy. She was a straightforward, kind girl...

At that time the four sons of Czar Nicholas I had many children and grandchildren, and together with the families of the Princes of Oldenburg, of the Dukes of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and of the Dukes of Leuchtenberg who were related to the Romanoffs and resided in Russia, the number of young bachelor princes was high. It was no wonder that two Montenegro girls found husbands among them — Anastasia married George, Duke of Leuchtenberg, and her sister Militza married Grand Duke Peter Nicholayevich, brother of the commander-in-chief of the Russian Army in the First World War.

Nussia had a close friend outside of Smolny, Baroness Vera Rokassowsky, who was twelve years her senior. Both girls were tall, had the same slender figures. and could wear each other's clothes.

The Rokassowsky family had several estates in the province of Vitebsk. Vera was the youngest of several boys and girls. Her brothers were serving now as officers of the regiments of the Guards, and her two sisters were already married. The father, the former Governor-General of Finland, had died in 1869. Vera was born in Helsingfors and was brought up by an English governess. In spite of her Russian name, Vera spoke Russian with a slight accent, and was more of a foreigner in her ways than a Russian.

She used to gallop wildly on a side-saddle, her hair was cut short, and she smoked cigarettes when only very few married women of society had the courage to smoke in public. She studied music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory,



*Four daughters of the last Czar, Grand Duchesses  
Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia.*



and lived with her mother, Baroness Alexandra Rokassowsky, an imperious old dowager who played cards (« vint », an advanced form of contract bridge) every night until the early hours of the morning. She had two Boulognese dogs which her butler took for daily walks.

The Rokassowsky mother and daughter had an apartment on Fontanka, opposite the Annichkoff Palace. The old Baroness invited Nussia to stay with her daughter each week-end that the girls of Smolny were permitted to visit their parents and relatives. In spite of the difference in age, Nussia and Vera became close friends. Nussia was impulsive and very sensitive, while Vera, due to her English upbringing, was reserved and did not show her feelings easily.

After staying in St. Petersburg a few days on one particular trip, my father had to rush back home where he had some urgent business. Paying a short visit to Baroness Rokassowsky, he noticed for the first time that her daughter Vera was rather good-looking. He did not dwell on this subject very long, but returned to his hotel, packed and ordered an « isvostschik » to drive him to the Warsaw Railroad Station. He went by train to Piskov, then to Ostrov, where his carriage, with his coachman Kusma, was waiting for him.

## THE NEGRO BOY OF CZAR PETER THE GREAT

### CHAPTER XII

The passenger train arrived at Ostrov on time and Kusma greeted my father as soon as he emerged from the station, followed by a porter who carried his light luggage.

Kusma had been notified of my father's arrival by wire that morning. He immediately harnessed the horses which had become restive in the stables of the inn where they were staying, and arrived at the railroad station about an hour before the appointed time.

My father gave the horses a quick glance and finding everything in order, got into his comfortable carriage.

« Let us go, Kusma, we are going home », he ordered, and the horses started at a trot. In a few minutes, the carriage turned into a chaussée, the big St. Petersburg-Vitebsk highway, going south towards Opochka. As usual, the four horses were harnessed tandem. Sometimes it was difficult to drive without a postilion (Vorreiter) but the horses were well broken in, and Kusma was an expert driver. Now the horses were running at a wide trot on the well-kept chaussée, feeling that they were going home, and in about an hour they easily covered some thirteen miles.

The distance from Ostrov to Kolpino was well over one hundred miles, and they had the entire night of travelling ahead of them. My father preferred to travel at night because there was usually very little traffic, and it was easier for the horses. At that time, highway robbery was practically unknown in Russia, and, besides, my father was always well armed. He carried a big thirty-two caliber Smith and

Wesson always fully loaded, and an English gun which he used for bear hunting. The gun was intended for use in the event his carriage (or his sled in the winter) was followed by a pack of wolves.

A couple of miles before getting into the town of Opochna, my father ordered Kusma to stop for dinner at a roadhouse he knew well. This roadhouse belonged to a Jew by the name of Leyba, and was known for clean beds and good food prepared by Leyba's wife.

Leyba himself rushed out to greet my father and attempted to kiss his hand, but remembered in time that my father did not like these signs of submission. Leyba seemed excited as if in his life something big was happening, something, about which he, Leyba, was very happy and very proud.

« Well, what is new? » my father inquired.

« Such blessings, such favor of Heaven! » (1), started Leyba, pronouncing the words with a heavy Jewish accent. « It is a blessing for my whole family, for my house! » In his excitement, Leyba could not find words to continue.

« What is it, Leyba? Just tell me, what happened? », my father urged him.

« Oh, Pan (in Polish, « Lord ») will not understand. It is such a joy, such blessing!... » and Leyba raised his eyes and both hands to Heaven.

« Well, what is it? » My father was getting impatient.

« You see, Pan, right now two rabbis are in my house. Not one, but two! A rabbi from Polotsk and a rabbi from Dünaburg (Dvinsk!) Oh, it is such a blessing! ». Leyba again raised his hands and disappeared in the portion of the house occupied by him and his family.

My father entered a guestroom which also served as a diningroom, and ordered a servant to bring some food and to give a good dinner to his coachman, too. He did not

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(1) The Orthodox Jews never pronounced the word *God* or *Lord*. Instead, they used the word *Heaven*.

Footnote of the Author

intend to stay the night at the roadhouse and was anxious to continue his trip.

While his dinner was being prepared, my father paced back and forth in the guestroom. He had been sitting the entire day, first in the compartment of a railroad car and then in his carriage. He noticed that the door leading into a private apartment occupied by Leyba and his family was slightly ajar. He looked through the opening of the door and saw a large room with a big square table in the middle. At this table, opposite each other, were sitting two aged rabbis, in lapserdaks (long frock-coats usually worn by Jews), and ermolkas (round caps). Both men had peyssy (whiskers) and long beards. They sat opposite each other solemnly, in complete silence.

My father looked at them once, and continued his pacing. After a few minutes he looked again. Neither one had moved, and not a word had been uttered.

Finally Leyba reappeared. He was still obviously elated. He carefully closed the door behind him so that my father could no longer see the two solemn rabbis.

«What a blessing of Heaven», Leyba started again, but my father interrupted him.

«Are these two the rabbis you are talking about?» he asked.

«Yes, they are. It is such a blessing!...».

«Leyba, why don't they talk? Why do they keep silent?»

«Why?» repeated Leyba, with obvious resentment. «You, Pan, do not understand it? How can you ask such a question? Don't you understand? When one knows everything, and another one knows everything, what have they to talk about?», and with a look of reproach, Leyba left the room.

Poor Leyba was unable to explain to my father a wise and ancient Oriental philosophy. The two old rabbis were meditating, respecting each other's silence. We, modern Europeans and Americans, do not devote enough time to meditation. We are too accustomed to 'rattling' continuously...

Soon dinner was served. After my father had eaten, and was told that Kusman had also finished his meal, he



paid Leyba well for his hospitality. As he was leaving the room, he was followed by Leyba's bows, and, with his guttural voice, the innkeeper asked the blessings of heaven for him. My father got into his carriage, and the horses started again at a wide trot.

They arrived in Kolpino at dawn, when dairymaids were going to the cattle-yards to milk the cows. The superintendent, Otto Brunner, a Lett graduated from an agricultural school in Riga, was already up, and greeted my father when he alighted from his carriage. He informed my father that Gregory Pushkin, the second son of the well-known Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin, had arrived the day before, and was asleep in one of the guestrooms.

The Pushkin estate, Selo Mikhailovskoye, was only about twenty miles from Kolpino, and Gregory Pushkin was a close friend of my father.

Gregory Pushkin had very few traces of Negro blood, although his father, the poet who was killed by d'Anthes in a duel in 1837, had the curly hair and features of a Negro. The Pushkin family was one of the Boyar families and belonged to the oldest Russian aristocracy, but the great-grandfather of the poet on his mother's side was a Negro by the name of Ibrahim who was presented in 1703 to Czar Peter the Great by Peter Tolstoy, Russian Ambassador to Constantinople.

Little Ibrahim was at that time six years old. The Czar liked the boy, and according to Russian custom had him baptized in a Russian church in Wilno. At the ceremony of baptism his godparents were the Czar himself and the Queen of Poland. The boy received the Christian name of Abraham (Jewish equivalent of Arabic Ibrahim) and according to the Russian custom to call a person by his Christian name and his father's first name, he was called Abraham Petrovitch (Peter's son, meaning in this case the Czar himself). The Czar gave him the status of a Russian hereditary nobleman and the family name of Hannibal.

While still a boy, he fulfilled the duties of a page of the Czar, but at the age of nineteen was sent by the Czar to Paris to finish his education. It took Abraham Petrovitch about ten years to finish an engineer's college for army

officers, but finally, in 1726, he was graduated, and returned to Russia.

By that time, Czar Peter the Great was dead, and on the throne of Russia was his widow, Empress Catherine I. The young Hannibal joined an artillery company with the rank of Lieutenant j.g. However, in 1727, this young Lieutennat got into a dispute with the all-powerful Field-Marshal Prince Alexander Danilovitch Menshikoff, a favorite of the late Czar, who, during the short reign of his widow, was the actual ruler of Russia. As a result of this dispute, the Field-Marshal banished the poor Negro to Siberia. This incident proved how close the black lieutenant stood to the Imperial Court.

In the meantime, Abraham Petrovitch married a daughter of a Greek merchant. His wife gave birth to a child — a girl who appeared to be completely white. Since then it has been scientifically proven that a child of mixed parents may be white, but our Negro instituted court proceedings against his wife, suing her for divorce. He accused her of infidelity and won his case!

Abraham Hannibal remained in Siberia for fourteen years and evidently the severe climate of Siberia agreed with this native of Africa. On the 25th of November, 1741, Empress Elisabeth, the younger daughter of Czar Peter the Great, ascended the throne of Russia and Hannibal was permitted to return. He was reinstated in the army and served during the reigns of three Sovereigns — Empress Elisabeth (1741-1761), Czar Peter III (1761-1762), and Empress Catherine II (1762-1796).

Upon his return from Siberia, Abraham Hannibal married Christine-Regine Skjoberg. His son from the second marriage, Joseph (in Russian, Osip), was evidently dark enough because his father did not dispute his legitimacy. Abraham Hannibal died in 1781. At the end of his life he was Major-General and Commandant of the fortress of Reval in Estland (now Esthonia), a province acquired by the Czar Peter the Great from Sweden.

Osip Abramovitch Hannibal had two daughters — Sophie and Nadejda. The older one, Sophie, married Adam von Rotkirch, and their daughter, Vera von Rotkirch, married

Alexander von Trautenberg. Their daughter, Dorothea von Trautenberg, married Baron George von Wrangell of the House Ludenhof, and their descendants, including General Peter Wrangell, Commander-in-Chief of the White Russian Army in South Russia, have all carried some Negro blood.

The younger daughter of Osip Abramovitch, Nadejda Osipovna, married Serge Pushkin, father of the Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin.

Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) married Natalie Goncharoff, of an old Russian noble family and a rare beauty. They had two sons, Alexander (1833-1907) and Gregory (1835-1905), a friend of my father, and two daughters, Maria and Natalie.

Natalie Pushkin was exceptionally beautiful. Evidently she inherited the beauty of her mother accentuated by a few drops of Negro blood. She married General von Dubelt, but divorced him, with great difficulty, and in 1868, married Prince Nicholas of Nassau, whose very close relative was the Grand Duke of Luxemburg. This second marriage was morganatic, and a cousin of her second husband, the reigning Prince zu Waldeck, granted the young wife a title of Countess von Merenberg.

Prince Nicholas of Nassau and his wife had two daughters and a son. Their elder daughter, Sophie von Merenberg, married, in 1891 in San Remo, Italy, Grand Duke Michael Michailovitch, who was called «Mish-Mish» by his intimate friends. «Mish-Mish» was a first cousin of Czar Alexander III, and his marriage to Sophie von Merenberg also was morganatic. As a wife of a Russian Grand Duke, Sophie von Merenberg received a title of Countess Torby. This title of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg was recognized in Great Britain where they lived. Their daughter, Nadejda Torby, born in Cannes in 1896, married, in 1916, Prince George von Battenberg, who in Great Britain received a title of Marquis of Milford-Haven. In 1917, the family name of Battenberg was changed in Great Britain to Mountbatten, and a son of George Milford-Haven, a close relative of the British Royal family, still carries some Negro blood of his ancestor Abraham Petrovitch Hannibal...

Gregory Pushkin, my father, and Leo Waxel, another

neighboring landowner, were passionate bear hunters. They used to hunt in several provinces where they were invited by their relatives and friends. They had killed a number of bears in the forests of Kraszuty, an estate of Michal Juriewicz, my father's uncle, and in Wyshki, an estate of Count Stanislaw Mohl.

After the Polish uprising, many Polish landowners were ordered by the Russian government to sell their family estates, and Count Stanislaw Mohl was one of them. He sold Wyshki to Leo Waxel, a Russian nobleman of Swedish extraction, but the sale was fictitious. All legal papers were duly signed and registered in the books of the province, but Leo Waxel did not pay any money to Mohl, and between the two of them it was agreed that the estate would remain the property of Stanislaw Mohl and his heirs. No written agreement was made to that effect because under the circumstances no written agreement would have been valid in court. Stanislaw Mohl trusted Leo Waxel implicitly.

About fifteen years later, Stanislaw Mohl addressed a petition to the Czar asking for permission to purchase back his family estate. His petition was granted, and Leo Waxel immediately signed a deed of sale in favor of the rightful owner of Wyshki. The two remained close friends for the rest of their lives.

My father realized that Gregory Pushkin did not expect to take part in a bear hunt at this time of year. In March, these animals usually crawled out of their lairs, emaciated after their long winter sleep when they did not get any food, and only sucked their own front paws. Their fur then hung loosely and it was not the right time to shoot them.

« Did you hear the woodgrouse this spring? » my father asked the superintendent.

« No, I did not », Brunner answered, « but Kostuk (a nickname for Constantin in Belorussian dialect) of Zaboritzka told me that there are a number of them in the Black Hill forest ».

« Fine! » and my father ordered a boy servant who carried his suitcase to prepare a bath and went to his room.

At nine o'clock he appeared in the diningroom. He was smoothly shaven, fresh and in his usual good humor. Gregory

Pushkin was already eating his breakfast. Emilia was at her usual place at the end of the table. In the presence of a guest she and my father greeted each other politely, and she inquired about Nussia.

At the table there was also Alexandra Bogomolec, a distant cousin of my father as well as of his wife. She was a close friend and a constant companion to Emilia. Volodia (a nickname for Woldemar), now five years old, was sitting with his tutor, and little Adela, on a high chair, was attended by her niania. My father's secretary, a young man, stood up politely and waited for my father to tell him to sit down.

After greetings were exchanged, my father sat at his usual place. «I did not expect to find you here, Gregory», he told his friend.

«I did not intend to come to Kolpino, but it was rather dull in Michailovskoye. So, here I am!», and Pushkin turned with a polite smile to Emilia. Conversation turned to the recent tragic events that disturbed everyone in Russia at that time. Pushkin wanted to know all possible details of the assassination of the Czar that were not reported in the newspapers, and kept my father talking, asking him many questions, but finally their conversation turned to the subject which interested them both — to hunting.

It was agreed that at two o'clock the following morning they would start for the Black Hill forest, which was only about forty minutes' drive, to shoot woodgrouse.

After breakfast, which lasted unusually long that morning, my father left his guest, and went to his office to attend to some important matters. His office as judge occupied two large rooms at the end of the house, and his secretary was already waiting for him.

The following morning at two o'clock sharp, Kusma brought a light carriage with two horses to the main entrance of Kolpino's house. Pushkin and my father, dressed in their hunting outfits with high boots, and with their shotguns, were ready. Two hunting dogs, an English spaniel named Baff and a pointer named Comte, which were permitted to stay in the house instead of in the kennels, were very excited. They saw the preparations and the shotguns carried by both men and were anxious to take part in a hunt,

but to their great disappointment they were not taken along.

My father and his friend got into the carriage and Kusma drove them along the wide road passing the park and family cemetery around Kolpino's lake. On the other side of the lake the road went through meadows and fields directly into a forest. Some clouds were covering the sky, and the night was very dark, but the horses knew the road well. After entering the forest they drove for another mile, when Kusma stopped the carriage.

« I believe that we better stop now and I will wait for you here », he said.

My father and Pushkin alighted from the carriage and walked into the forest on the left side of the road. It was the Black Hill forest that covered this part of the estate, spreading out to the shores of Lake Ostrovito, about three miles distant. Nearer the lake there were steep hills which gave the forest its name, and at this time of the year it was a favorite mating place of woodgrouse

This bird was of the size of a big turkey cock, and usually sat high in a tree. Every so often a woodgrouse would start to sing. His singing was rather a loud gobble intended to scare some possible invisible enemies; then he would stop and listen. While the bird was singing, his ears closed tightly, and he could not hear anything. It was the reason why in Russia woodgrouse were called « gloohar », i.e., a « deaf one ». But as soon as the bird stopped singing his hearing was excellent. He would hear the faintest sound and would fly away, alarmed by any noise made by hunters.

My father and his friend walked quietly for half a mile. Then they stopped and listened. In the distance they could hear the gobbling of a woodgrouse. They moved silently in the direction of the sound, trying not to make any noise. The gobbling was now heard clearly and they had to be careful not to alarm the bird.

They both stopped and waited for him to start up again. Then they ran as fast as they could toward the sound. Bushes and lower branches of trees lashed their faces. They both made plenty of noise but they did not pay any attention to it. They listened only to the bird and as soon as the bird stopped singing they stopped abruptly, too. Their

positions were not comfortable but they were afraid to move. They were even afraid to breathe loudly because the bird could easily hear the faintest sound. They waited for him to start singing again, and again they ran as fast as they could...

After running at intervals and standing still like statues, and then running again, they finally arrived at the tree on which the bird was sitting. It was pitch dark and they could not see him, but he was gobbling directly above their heads. Peering into the darkness they finally distinguished the outline of a big cock sitting on a branch, and when he started gobbling again, Pushkin took careful aim and fired. His shot reverberated throughout the forest. The bird stopped singing, but he did not fall. Obviously it was a miss. But it was impossible for Pushkin, who was an expert shot, to miss a big bird, shooting a shotgun at such a short distance. Both men wondered what happened. They stood there in silence for a long time. They heard the bird moving. Finally he started gobbling again, and my father stepped from under the big tree, took careful aim and fired. This time the cock fell to the ground.

They picked him up, and stood there motionless for some time, hoping to hear another woodgrouse singing. Then they heard some footsteps, and a man with a gun approached — a forest guard. He recognized my father and took off his cap.

« You, Vasili, were fast catching us today », my father told him, smiling.

« I was warned yesterday of your coming, Pan », the guard answered, « and was on the lookout for you ».

My father told the guard about the first shot that evidently was a miss, and pointed out the big branch on which the cock had been sitting. In the dim light of early dawn, Vasili examined the tree and shook his head.

« If you fired the first shot directly from under the tree », he said, turning to Pushkin, « your shot evidently landed in the branch near the bird — it is wide enough ».

« But was it possible for the bird not to get frightened by my shot? » Pushkin wondered.

« He stopped singing, but apparently did not understand what had happened. While singing, he could not hear a thing », Vasili answered. Then addressing my father, « Let us walk about a mile from here. There is a place where we will find some more », he said.

That morning they shot one more woodgrouse. They were tired when they came back to their carriage. Vasili put both birds in the carriage, and the horses started at a brisk trot for home. When they arrived at Kolpino, it was already daylight.

The two men were hungry, and a breakfast was served immediately. While they were still drinking their coffee the young secretary of my father informed him that two policemen had brought a man who was accused of stealing horses.

My father ordered the policemen and their prisoner to be given something to eat, and told his secretary that in about an hour he would open a court session.

In the vicinity of Kolpino, there were several large villages which belonged to the peasants of the « Old Faith » (Starover). These peasants belonged formerly to the Crown and lived there since the first partition of Poland, when Belorussia was annexed by Russia. In the old days, for some unknown reason these peasants were called « Panzyrnyie Boyare », or in English, « Armored Nobles ». They did not touch liquor and tobacco, were good farmers, and lived better than the rest of the peasants in Belorussia. They were fond of horses and many of them owned excellent trotters. These horses were not thorough-breds, but many of them were of good Orlov stock (Orlov trotters were well known throughout Russia).

In the winter time, when all the numerous lakes of Belorussia were covered with solid ice, these peasants used to make a racetrack on one of the lakes, a circle about two or three miles long. It was interesting to watch their horses harnessed to regular sleds, running on this improvised racetrack. Their owners made bets, trying to outrun each other. For these peasants, their horses were their most precious possession. Besides, at that time in Russia, horse stealing was considered a very serious crime.



An hour later, my father, wearing a heavy gold chain around his neck (insignia of a judge in Imperial Russia) walked into his office which served as a courtroom. The large room was crowded with peasants, men and women, who were waiting for the beginning of the trial. My father ordered the prisoner to be brought in. The two policemen entered the room, escorting a small, uncomely, middle-aged peasant who looked sullenly at my father. One of his legs was shorter than the other, and he was limping badly.

There was no jury at this trial. There was no prosecutor. The man was accused by the owners of the horses that were stolen. The accused man had no lawyers to defend him, either. It was the simplest form of a trial before a judge, who in Russian was called «Arbiter of the Peace» (Mirovoy Posrednik).

My father questioned both policemen and all witnesses. From the testimony of all these people, it appeared that four horses had been stolen a week previously from the peasants of «Old Faith» in the vicinity of Kolpino. Then the thief, or thieves, rode, through the night, over sixty miles to Polotsk, to a local fair, evidently with the intention of selling them there. Nobody saw the accused man stealing the horses, but he was in possession of these horses when he was arrested in Polotsk. He was immediately accused of stealing, but denied his guilt. His explanation was that a couple of hours before his arrest he had bought the horses from some gypsies.

My father questioned the prisoner and the latter repeated his story. There was considerable doubt in the mind of my father about the man's guilt. How could this crippled little man steal four horses and then ride over sixty miles at night? It appeared practically impossible, and yet something in the sullen face of this peasant made my father doubt his innocence. After considerable consideration, my father pronounced him guilty, although not absolutely certain that he was right.

After the verdict was read in court, there was silence for a few minutes, and then suddenly the prisoner fell on his knees, made the sign of the Cross, looking at the icon which was in the corner of the room, and said.

« I admit... I am guilty ».

There was a sigh of relief in the room. Tension was broken. My father silently thanked the Lord that he had not condemned an innocent man.

« Tell me », he asked the prisoner, « how could you ride on a horse without a saddle for over sixty miles at night and manage four horses? »

« Horses know me and I am handy with them. You give me any horse, Your Honor, and you will see for yourself ».

On the spur of the moment my father challenged the man to ride on one of his anglo-arabs which only he himself and his coachman Kusma could manage. Everybody left the room and went into the courtyard. My father ordered Frou-Frou to be brought out, a young, spirited mare. A crowd of peasants stood watching; they were thrilled by unexpected entertainment.

Two stable boys brought Frou-Frou out of the stables. On both sides of the horse a man was holding a strong rope attached to a ring on the bridle. The temperamental mare was kicking, prancing, and trying to stand up on her hind legs. The horse thief looked at her and there was the admiration of a connoisseur in his eyes.

« A beautiful horse! » he said.

He went, limping, straight to the horse. For a brief moment he gently stroked her left shoulder. He was too short to reach the withers of the horse. Surprisingly, Frou-Frou stopped prancing, and looked at the little man from the corner of her left eye.

« Let the horse go! » the man ordered abruptly. At the same time, he jumped slightly, getting hold of the bridle with his left hand, and the mane. Without making any perceptible effort, he was suddenly sitting on the smooth back of the mare, his bare feet touching her sides gently.

Frou-Frou snorted, leaped into the air, and in no time was out of the yard, running at full gallop along the road leading toward the Post Station Linetz. She covered the distance of half a mile to the bridge in less than a minute. Her hoofs made a clattering sound on the wooden boards of

the bridge. She continued at full gallop up the hill, and in a few seconds, Frou-Frou, with the confessed thief on her back, disappeared out of sight.

It all happened so fast that everybody was taken by surprise. But when the man and the horse disappeared, my father realized in what position he had put himself... he, the judge, had given his fastest horse to the condemned man, who was under arrest, and had helped him to escape!

« Quick! Get Krassotka out and follow him! » he ordered the stable boys. Krassotka, « A Beautiful One » in Russian, was another anglo-arabian mare which was almost as fast as Frou-Frou.

But, while the boys ran to the stables and were trying frantically to get the second horse out, Frou-Frou with the man on her back reappeared, galloping home at the same speed. A minute later, Frou-Frou was already in the yard, stopping in front of my father. Her rider slid gently to the ground, giving the bridle to one of the stable boys.

« A beautiful horse! » he said.

## RESIGNATION

### CHAPTER XIII

My father traveled a great deal, and mostly by horses, either in a carriage or sleigh, depending on the time of year. He often went to Lutzin, where the sessions of the Council of Justices of the Peace periodically took place, and to Sebezh, the county seat, a small town of some three thousand inhabitants, built on a long and narrow peninsula and surrounded on three sides by the waters of a huge lake. He went to Ostrov, Opochka, Düna-burg (in Russian, Dvinsk), and once in a while he visited Vitebsk, capital of the province.

He was in Nevel, a small town situated on the Highway St. Petersburg-Vitebsk, about twenty-five miles south of Kolpino, when he received some news that changed his entire life.

He was playing besigue with some neighboring landowners in a local club when he was informed that a messenger from Kolpino had just arrived and wanted to see him. He went out to the lobby and recognized one of his stable boys. Otto Brunner, the superintendent, had sent the man on horseback with a letter to my father. Evidently it was urgent.

The man produced a letter out of the bottom of his cap. My father opened it. At first he could not understand what it was all about. Brunner wrote that that morning a police officer with a few policemen had arrived at Kolpino with a search warrant. They were supposed to look for a storage of ammunition. The police officer knew my father and knew Brunner very well, and made only a cursory search

of the house and other buildings of the estate. Of course, they did not find any ammunition except a collection of shotguns and rifles which my father used for hunting, and which the superintendent showed to the police at once.

The police officer told Brunner confidentially that the search was ordered on the basis of secret information the authorities had received from a Russian priest, Odintzov, who accused my father of some underground Polish conspiracy. Brunner made a promise to the friendly police officer not to divulge this information to anyone except my father.

While reading this letter, my father remembered how, a few years previously, he had found the same priest, Odintzov, on a road, and had mistaken him for a bear, as he was drunk and was walking in the mud of the road on all fours. Evidently the priest was still afraid of my father and wanted to discredit him. All this my father could easily understand. But he could not understand how the high authorities of the province could have given credence to the fantastic information they received from the priest and order a search of his house! It was incredible and it was insulting! My father was furious!

He gave some money to the stable boy who had brought him the message, and told him to eat a good supper, and to feed his horse, and then to return to Kolpino.

Then he called Kusma and ordered him to harness his horses. He returned to his hotel which was only a block away, packed his suitcase and his necessaire, and in about an hour was riding at full speed to the city of Vitebsk.

He arrived in Vitebsk early in the morning of the following day and stopped at the Kushliss Hotel on Zamkovaya Street. He washed, shaved, changed his clothes and had his breakfast, then called a droshky to drive him to the Governor's house.

The Governor had several secretaries. One of them received my father and asked him to wait in the reception room. At this early hour he was in the room alone. He waited for more than an hour, until the same secretary walked in and conducted him to the Governor's office.

The Governor had been recently appointed, and my father had had no opportunity to meet him before this. He

was a man in his fifties, and there was nothing in his appearance to distinguish him from the average Russian civil employee of that period. However, he was a member of an old Russian princely family, and the insignias on his uniform frock-coat showed that he had a civil rank which corresponded to the rank of a general in the army.

The Governor rose from his seat behind his desk and shook hands with my father. My father introduced himself, and the Governor asked him to sit down. He then told the Governor about the search of Kolpino's house and expressed strong resentment and indignation at this act. The Governor listened attentively, and when my father was finished, said, not looking at my father, but turning his head to the window:

« Well, my dear Baron, do not get excited. After all, you are Polish. Through your late mother you are related to some prominent Polish families. I was told that you speak Polish better than Russian and you certainly have sympathies for the Polish people... ».

« Yes, Your Excellency », my father interrupted, « I have sympathies for the Polish people, but it is quite far from not being loyal to the Czar ».

« The information we received », continued the Governor, « was from the most reliable source. Besides, you know that the government nowadays looks with a frown on anyone who is not one hundred percent Russian, who does not belong to our Orthodox Russian Church, and who has sympathies for the people who were recently in revolt against the Czar! »

« And my position of a judge does not guarantee against being suspected of some fantastic conspiracy? » my father asked with an ironical smile.

« Well, no. Not necessarily. In spite of being a judge you can be, and you are, more Polish than Russian. All your friends and relatives are Polish, too ».

My father did not argue.

« In that case, Prince, I had better resign. If I cannot be trusted, I do not see how I will be able to fulfill my duties as a judge ». My father stood up.

« It is entirely up to you », the Governor answered, and the tone of his voice was not friendly. He got up from his chair.

My father bowed and left the room. He felt that if their discussion continued, he could have told the Governor many very unpleasant facts.

My father returned to his hotel and after lunch, Kusma drove him home. This time there was no hurry, and the horses were running at an easy trot.

Riding along the familiar highway, my father had time to think over the events of the last twenty-four hours. He was not excited any more, and could calmly appraise the situation.

He realized that the Governor followed the recent trend established by the new Czar — Russian nationality, Russian language, Russian Orthodox Church, and the Czar himself always dressed in a military uniform decidedly Russian in style. His uniform frock-coat resembled a peasant's caftan, wide trousers of a Russian post-coachman shoved into high boots of very soft leather which folded in like an accordion. Consequently, the high boots were actually low boots. These kinds of boots were worn by Russian peasants on Sunday and by merchants of the second and third guild.

But, besides his obvious desire to follow this new trend, the Governor was well-informed and quite antagonistic to my father. It appeared certain that my father had more enemies than one local priest. Evidently the secret denunciation of the priest served only as a signal for an all-out attack on him.

My father asked himself who these enemies were, and he realized that actually he had only a very few friends. The great majority of men of his own class were very critical of him and very antagonistic for an obvious reason — his popularity among women.

Tall, well-built, this red-haired giant was an excellent dancer. He was gay and witty. He was clever and independent in his opinions, and did not permit anyone to step on his toes. He was an expert shot and a master of fencing. He was not afraid of any adversary.

There was some gossip about his challenging men to a duel. In two cases, men preferred to apologize, and in one case a man missed and when it was my father's turn to shoot, the man fainted. It was said that my father shot in the air instead of at the man and turned his back on him.

Very few women could resist his charm, and husbands, lovers and relatives hated to watch how, in eager rivalry, their women were surrounding my father for attention.

Any one of these men could have spoken to the Governor against him. There were too many of them.

My father was spoiled, but he was not conceited. He under-estimated the impression he made on strangers. He was not arrogant and was not trying to impose his will and his opinion on others. Only stupidity could arouse his ire. Being strong and healthy, he was usually in a good humor, ready to have a good laugh. He underestimated the hatred which some men felt towards him. He did not anticipate the events of the last couple of days and was taken completely by surprise.

He arrived at Kolpino late at night and immediately went to his rooms. His healthy organism required a good rest and sleep. The horses were tired, too, and Kusma was muttering something unpleasant to himself when he led the horses into the stables.

The following morning, fresh and in his usual good humor, my father made Brunner repeat to him the events and conversations of the preceding day. He laughed when the superintendent described to him how the policemen were trying to find arms in the haylofts, going from one barn to another. At Kolpino, there were eight big barns filled with hay.

Discussing Odintzov's secret denunciation, my father shrugged his shoulders.

« No good deed remains unpunished », he said, « if my deed could be called a good one, which I doubt. I was sorry for the fellow and his wife, and promised not to denounce him to the authorities, which I should have done. And you see the results ».

The country road which crossed Kolpino from one end to another went around the park, but the road that led between the buildings of the estate was shorter by about a mile, and Odintzov usually took this short-cut. My father gave the strictest orders not to permit the priest to take this road any more.



«I simply do not want to see his face again», my father said, and the subject was closed.

In a few days my father submitted his resignation. It did not take long for the fact of his resignation to become known in his district. Many people came to him every day, mostly peasants and Jews, trying to persuade him to retract his resignation. But my father was a very proud man, and he flatly refused to reconsider his decision.

A few months later, the population of his judicial district presented a petition to the Czar to bestow on him an insignia established by the Czar Alexander II for the Justices of the Peace. This insignia was given only at the request of a grateful population. This petition was granted, and it was the only decoration which my father wore in the button-hole of his full dress for the rest of his life.

## THE LEAGUE OF THREE EMPERORS

### CHAPTER XIV

After his resignation, my father had plenty of free time. Travelling from one estate to another and attending different social gatherings, as well as hunting, could not occupy all of his time and fill his life with serious interest.

If my father were happily married, he would possibly have settled down in Kolpino, devoting all of his time to his family and to the management of the estate. But, since his married life was far from being a happy one he began to look for something that would be of real interest to him.

He was a connoisseur of horses and an admirer of the Arabian and English thoroughbreds. He could make a perfect drawing of a horse, trotting, galloping or standing still, not starting his drawing with the head, but with a hoof on any of her legs. He knew every bone, every muscle in a horse's body, and looking at a horse, he could tell its capacity for running, jumping, or pulling a heavy load. And, he decided to start a stud farm at Kolpino, breeding especially Anglo-Arabs for chase hunting and some trotters for carriages.

A couple of Anglo-Arabian mares which he kept at that time were not sufficient for a stud farm. He needed a dozen or more good mares and a couple of stallions. It was necessary to enlarge Kolpino's stables; he needed professional trainers and many other things. For this kind of enterprise, he needed working capital, and he decided to sell Zabelja.

This estate, as well as Rebljo, was rented. My father knew only too well that without personal supervision of the owner, any superintendent, even the most honest one, could

become a thief. The sale of Zabelja did not represent a problem. My father found ready buyers and the estate was sold.

If my father had only known that about twenty-five years later two railroads would be built, one from St. Petersburg to Vitebsk, and another from Moscow to Windava, a port on the Baltic Sea — and the crossing point of these two railroads happened to be only about twenty miles from Zabelja! At this crossing point a station, Novosokolniki, was built, and this station became an important railroad junction. If he had only waited twenty years, he could have sold Zabelja at a price some twenty times higher! But he could not possibly foresee that fast development and progress of European Russia in the next few decades... and Zabelja was sold.

My father went to Berszada. His cousin, Mieczyslaw, the oldest son of Stanislaw Juriewicz, was dead. The owner of Berszada was Mieczyslaw's son, Fryderyk. He sold my father some excellent mares and two stallions, every horse with a pedigree certificate. The stables in Kolpino were enlarged, a race track was made, an expert trainer was engaged, and my father received official authorization to maintain a regular stud farm in Kolpino.

Within a few years, all available fields in Kolpino were seeded either with oats or clover. At that time, the price of lumber was very low because Kolpino was too far from any river or railroad, and the transportation of lumber was much too costly; consequently, the estate was not bringing in any income.

To this it is necessary to add my father's losses in card games. He was a very good player, and an excellent companion at card tables. One never knew whether he was winning or losing. He always remained the same — pleasant and jovial. Some years later he used to tell me that in the long run only the clubs and the cheats win. He wanted me to remember this truth which he learned the hard way himself.

The sale of horses could not possibly cover all the expenses. Evidently this enterprise required a much bigger working capital and many years to promote and to establish the name. My father sold excellent horses, but he could not

get as high prices as the old, well-established stud farms were getting for their steeds. The losses were increasing, and in a few years, Rebljo was sold, too. A few years later the stud farm at Kolpino was liquidated.

However, while it lasted, Kolpino was a very lively and interesting place. One could watch how beautiful, young, prancing horses were broken to carry saddles. A few weeks later, the same horses were trotting at the measured tempo of a cavalry horse, making «voltes», i.e., turning around on a very small space, so that the whole body of the horse could get accustomed to bending at only the touch of a rein to its neck. A couple of months later, they were racing and jumping over the barriers.

Other horses were trained to be harnessed first in a cabriolet, then in a two-horse carriage. These horses trotted around the track. There were all sorts of carriages, harnesses and saddles used, the equipment chiefly English.

At one of the bear hunts, my father shot a mother bear and picked up her cub which he brought to Kolpino. It happened to be a female cub which was nursed from a milk bottle. The cub was named Mashka. Little Mashka was very cute. She usually followed the coachman, Kusma, and knew every horse in the stables. When Mashka grew up, she was put on a chain attached to a strong pole in front of the entrance to the stables. The chain was long enough to permit Mashka to greet every horse as it emerged from the entrance. Usually, Mashka walked on her hind legs, affectionately embracing the neck of a horse with her paw, and following the horse as far as the chain permitted.

One day my father got the idea to take Mashka for a ride. He put her on the left side in a cabriolet and sat himself in the driver's seat on the right. Mashka sat quietly. Her whole attention was concentrated on the left wheel of the cabriolet, which she was trying to catch with her paw. Everything was fine for a couple of miles until they met a peasant in his wagon on the road. As soon as the peasant's horse smelled the bear, she turned over the wagon, dragged it for a distance until it broke, tore the harness, and galloped home. In this upheaval, the peasant was hurt, and my father had to pay him for all the damages, and for his medical

treatment, as well as reimbursing him for time lost while recuperating. It happened to be a good round sum, and since that time Mashka stayed home, securely attached to her chain in front of the stables.

My father was away on a trip when a very unfortunate accident completely changed the entire life of his son, my half-brother, Volodia. At that time, Volodia was thirteen years old. He had a tutor who was preparing him for examinations at a military academy which Volodia was supposed to enter in the fall of the same year.

In his spare time, Volodia liked to follow Otto Brunner, the superintendent. It was interesting for him to watch how the superintendent handled the management of the estate, his dealings with the peasants, and how he dispersed orders to workmen. Otto Brunner was recently discharged from the army after three years of service. Compulsory military service for all classes of the population was introduced in Russia in 1874.

It happened in the office of the estate. The office was a large room, and a couple of peasants were present at the time. My brother took a shotgun which was hanging on the wall, and which belonged to Brunner, and asked him if the gun was loaded. Brunner assured him that the gun was not loaded, and Volodia started the regular army manual of arms with the gun, while Brunner gave him the necessary instructions. Finally, Volodia aimed the gun at the closed entrance door. Brunner stood about six feet away on his right. Brunner commanded « Fire! » and Volodia pressed the trigger.

At that very moment the entrance door half opened and in the opening the head of a Jew appeared. The gun fired and the unfortunate Jew fell, fatally wounded. Otto Brunner also fell — he had been killed, too.

The gun happened to be loaded with large size buckshot for wolves and some of the buckshot ricocheted from the half-opened door and struck the superintendent.

It is difficult to describe the effect this double killing had on Volodia. I was told that he was simply stunned. Later on he cried hysterically.

The authorities were immediately notified. A carriage was sent for a doctor. My father was notified. It was a terrific blow for Emilia, who adored her son. An official investigation proved conclusively that my brother was innocent. The gun belonged to the superintendent and he had assured Volodia that it was not loaded, and he himself had ordered the gun fired. Therefore, there was no trial.

However, this accident had a profound effect on my brother. For a long time he could not sleep without strong sedatives. He woke at night screaming wildly, and in an excitable state. On the advice of a doctor, his studies were interrupted and he, with his tutor, was sent on a trip.

In the fall he entered high school in Smolensk. My father arranged for him to live in the apartment of the assistant superintendent of the school. My father donated a large sum of money to the family of the Jew killed in the accident. Otto Brunner was not married and both his parents were dead. However, my father wrote to his brother, Peter Brunner, who was graduated from the same agricultural school in Riga, and offered him his late brother's post as Kolpino's superintendent. Peter Brunner agreed, and a couple of months later arrived in Kolpino and moved into the same quarters where his brother had lived.

After Volodia moved to Smolensk, he became very unfriendly to our father. Within a couple of years, without our father's knowledge, but with the approval of his mother who supplied him with extra money as he needed it, Volodia moved out of the assistant superintendent's apartment and rented a room of his own. He frequented the company of a group of Russian intellectuals older than himself, who were known for their radical, even socialistic, tendencies.

At that time, the Russian government paid very little attention to the physical education of scholars. Young boys, not to mention girls, were not interested in any sport, and were supposed to devote all their time to studies. Volodia read Hegel, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, but above all, he studied Karl Marx, and became an ardent socialist. A family of Sheverdin-Maximov, well known among Russian socialists, had a special influence on his way of thinking. This family consisted of two brothers, university students at that time,

and their sister Luba, who suffered from tuberculosis. Unfortunately, Volodia fell in love with this sickly girl.

After Volodia's graduation from high school in Smolensk, my father intended to send him to a polytechnical college in Riga, but Volodia refused flatly to follow his father's advice. Instead, he went to Berlin University to study chemistry. My father was paying for his tuition, giving him a monthly allowance, and it was quite a blow for my father when a man who was a member of the Russian Secret Service informed him that his son was a member of a revolutionary socialist party!

My father lived through another great sorrow when his daughter Adela died of galloping consumption at the age of sixteen. Adela loved skating, and one very cold day while skating, contracted a severe cold. In a week her cold turned into galloping consumption, and in about three weeks Adela was dead.

Adela had an old cat, her favorite, which usually slept at the foot of her bed. It was found later that the cat had tuberculosis and poor Emilia was convinced that it was this cat that passed the disease to her daughter. Adela was buried in the family vault at Kolpino.

In the meantime, Nussia, graduated from Smolny, returned home to Kolpino. Approximately at the time of the death of her half-sister, Nussia confessed to my father that she was in love with a man and intended to marry him.

Nussia was always very close to my father, and he asked her anxiously who the man was. He happened to be Vasili von Hocken, former officer of the 19th Dragoon Regiment of Archangelogorodsk, who was stationed in the Government Excise Office in Velikie Luki. Vasili von Hacken had a reputation as a « bretteur » and a gambler, who spent his nights either in gambling establishments or houses of ill repute. A story was told that while he was still an officer, he fought a duel with another officer of the same regiment. They drew lots to see who was to commit suicide; Vasili von Hacken drew the fatal lot. He shot himself through the heart. He was between life and death for six months, but lived. He was forced to resign from his regiment and got a position in the Government Excise Office. His old mother

was still living on their small estate in the Province of Voronesh. And now my sister wanted to marry this man, about twelve years her senior.

My father was shocked. His lovely daughter, so young and so unsophisticated, was to marry this gambler! Oh, no! He was ready to protest and to forbid Nussia this marriage.

He took Nussia in his arms, kissed her, carassed her silky hair, and tried to dissuade her, but all his arguments were in vain. Nussia was in love, and was determined to marry the man of her choice.

My father talked to her for hours with no results. Finally, he asked her to wait at least one month before announcing her engagement. During this month, Nussia promised earnestly to try to reconsider her decision.

A month later, she told my father that she was no longer in doubt about her feelings and that her decision to marry Vasili von Hacken was irrevocable. My father was forced to agree, and her engagement, was announced. Immediately, Nussia with her step-mother Emilia, busied themselves preparing her trousseau, and my father selected horses, harnesses, and carriages to give to his daughter as a dowry. Besides, he deposited in Nussia's name a certain sum of money, warning her not to pass all this money at once to her husband. Nussia promised, and was married. The newlyweds rented an apartment in Velikie Luki, a town of the Province of Pskov.

In these last ten years, my father had become quite tolerant and understanding. He was approaching his fifties, the best years of his life were gone, and he realized that he had accomplished very little, practically nothing. It was a very alarming thought...

His career as a judge, after a brilliant start, had ended abruptly with his resignation. He could not blame himself for such a sad ending, but the fact remained — this phase of his activities had come to an end. In 1890, Czar Alexander III abolished Justices of the Peace (Arbiters), freely elected by the population, and replaced them with Land Captains (Zemskiye Nachalniki), petty officials appointed by Governors. This act gave my father a certain satisfaction and consolation — his career as a judge would have ended in



any event, even if he had not presented his resignation a few days after his house had been searched by the police.

His married life was becoming unbearable. He and Emilia were two strangers living in the same house, and constantly on each other's nerves.

His son? He hated to think of this boy who was so unfriendly to him. And now this boy was a socialist! He belonged to a group of people whom my father despised.

His daughters? One of them was dead, and the other was married to a man of whom he did not approve. He was very much afraid that Nussia would be unhappy in her marriage.

Financially, as a businessman, my father was a failure, and he realized it. He had inherited three estates, and now only one was left. His venture with the stud farm had disastrous results.

Besides, times had changed, and my father had a strong resentment toward the Slavophil policies of the government. The Slavophiles were trying to strengthen the peasant communes. Under their influence, the government passed a law authorizing any peasant commune, at a general meeting of its members, to pass a resolution that undesirable members of the commune were to be deported to Siberia, and this resolution was carried out by the police!

Of course, the poor mujiks were not free! Their former masters were at least educated men, but now they depended upon the whim of a mob that could be, and actually was, very cruel to its own members. Commune decisions were prompted by envy and personal dislike. And who suffered, mostly? The best workmen, the thrifty ones, those who succeeded in becoming more prosperous than their neighbors. They were called «kulacks», or, in Russian, «fists».

My father knew the psychology and the nature of the Russian peasants. They were ignorant and cruel. They were lax and lazy and envious of each other, and of the neighboring landowner, but at heart, all were capitalists!

Russian peasants were often cruel to animals. Squirrels were shot mercilessly with slings for the sheer pleasure of killing. Rocks were thrown at dogs and cats; consequently

village dogs were vicious. Peasants beat their children while making them work hard. A little girl of eleven or twelve was often compelled to draw and carry heavy buckets of water, and to stand barefoot, in the winter, on the ice which usually covered the ground around a well. They did not care if the girl died. « One mouth less to feed », they said. Husbands beat their wives. There was a saying in Russian, « If a man did not beat his wife, he did not love her ».

It was no pleasure to travel on country roads on Sunday because every Sunday, as a rule, most peasants were drunk. They shouted wildly, using vile language, and quite often their brawls led to fights.

Their religion was based on superstition and fear, but, in general, peasants hated their priests. To meet a priest on a road was considered a bad omen. In the fall, when a Russian priest would go in his wagon through his parish from village to village, trying to collect donations for himself and for his church, the peasants would hide their grain, hogs, poultry, and anything of value from the greedy eyes of their spiritual father. A priest usually retaliated by refusing to baptize and to perform funeral services in a family of a peasant whose donations, in the opinion of the priest, were too meager.

During the reign of Czar Alexander III (1881-1894) the discontent of the peasants was growing, but the foreign policy of the government was still worse. This policy was disastrous for the Russian Empire.

In 1871, at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, there was an outbreak of Communism in Paris which was suppressed by the Prussian troops. The first translation into Russian of « Das Kapital » by Karl Marx appeared a few years prior to that, and between 1864 and 1914, some 500,000 copies of Marx's works were sold in Russia (1).

Already in the second half of the XIX century the Sovereigns of Europe were aware of the danger of the Communist doctrine. In 1872, three emperors — Czar

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(1) As stated in 1839 in the official publication of the Soviet Government « Kanizhnaya Letopis ».

Note of the Author.

Alexander II of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany and Emperor Franz-Josef of Austria-Hungary, met in Berlin and concluded the so-called « Three Emperors' League ». Their agreement provided a mutual guaranty of the territories of their empires, a common action against possible revolutions and mutual consultation on the « Balkan Question ».

As long as this League existed, European peace was assured. No power could dare to challenge these three empires!

The alliance had become inoperative at the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, but in 1881 it was revived. This tripartite alliance was not an aggressive one. It provided that if one of the signatories were to become engaged in war with a fourth power, the other two would maintain a friendly neutrality. It was an ideal political set-up to maintain peace, and to guarantee all three empires against any possible revolution or Communist outbreaks. But, unfortunately, Russian Slavophiles advanced a theory of Pan-Slavism.

They argued that the greatest Slavonic country of all, Russia, had a sacred « mission » to fight the « infidel » Turks, and to free her oppressed « little brothers » (« Bratoushki » in Russian), uniting them all under the sceptre of the Russian Czar.

Actually, this ultra-nationalistic Slavonic movement was supported by only a small group of Russian intellectuals, but the masses of Russian people remained completely indifferent. As a matter of fact, they had not the slightest idea what it was all about, and cared even less.

In the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the siege of Plevna alone cost the Russian army more than 250,000 men killed! The people mourned their dead, and the Russian soldiers, having a decided sympathy for the Turks, could not understand why they had to fight for the liberation of « little brothers » who remained completely foreign to them!

If the dreams of Slavophiles and Pan-Slavists were realized, and Russia had succeeded in acquiring new territories populated by Slavonic nations, it would have brought Russia nothing but trouble. The shining example was Poland. The first Polish uprising took place in 1831, and the second in 1863. These uprisings took place only in the Russian part of Poland; the Poles in Austria and Germany remained calm.

Furthermore, the second Polish uprising attracted the attention of all European power and provided them with a pretext to interfere in Russian internal affairs. Only by a brilliant move of dispatching the Russian fleet to the North American harbors, Czar Alexander II changed his position from a defensive one to an offensive one, and averted a possible conflict.

Russian Slavophiles did not know the real nature of the Slavonic nations in the Balkans, or those who were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian empire. These nations were accustomed to the European way of life, and Russia remained actually, foreign to them all. When, after the First World War, Croatia and Slavonia were finally «liberated» from the Austria «yoke», and were united with independent Serbia in one Slavonic kingdom, Croats were so dissatisfied with this arrangement that they assassinated Serbian King Alexander Karageorgevich in 1934, when he was riding with Barthou, a French Minister, through the streets of Marseilles in France.

Fortunately, Czar Alexander II and Prince Gorchakoff, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, were not Slavophiles, but Czar Alexander III was an ardent follower of this movement and considered Bulgaria as a vassal-province of Russia. He expected Prince Alexander von Battenberg to follow his directives.

In 1885, without Russia's approval, Prince Alexander von Battenberg carried out a coup d'état and effected the union of the Province of Rumelia with Bulgaria. Czar Alexander III was furious. Against the advice of Nicholas Giers, his Minister of Foreign Affairs who succeeded Prince Gorchakoff in 1882, the Czar supported a revolution in Bulgaria. The Prince (2) was forced to leave the country, but, surprisingly, «ungrateful» Bulgarians were reluctant to subordinate their policy to Russian whims, and elected as their new ruler Prince Ferdinand von Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Prince Ferdinand certainly was not pro-Russian.

The results of these elections were attributed by the Russian government to some undesirable Austrian influence.

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(2) Prince Alexander of Battenberg was a first cousin of Czar Alexander III.

Note of the Author.

and in 1887, when the Three Emperors' League was to be renewed for another three years, Russia backed out, and the League ceased to exist.

Bismarck, Grand Chancellor of Germany, concluded an alliance with Austria, which Italy joined in 1891 (the Triple Alliance). However, Bismarck tried to salvage the Three Emperors' League and concluded a «re-insurance» treaty with Russia for three years, both countries pledging to remain friendly-neutral in case of an attack on one of them by a third power.

In 1890, Bismarck retired and in his place Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed Count Caprivi, who was trying at that time to get on the good side of Great Britain, and the «re-insurance» treaty with Russia was not renewed.

Nicholas Giers continued to advocate friendship with Germany, but Czar Alexander III regarded his Minister of Foreign Affairs merely as his chief clerk in the Foreign Office, and hastened to accept French overtures (3).

After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, France was actually at the mercy of Germany, and consequently was seeking a friendly agreement with Russia. In July, 1891, a French naval squadron was received at Kronstadt, a fortress which protected the Russian capital from the sea, and the Russian empire concluded an alliance with the French Republic («The Entente Cordiale»).

In the elation over this achievement, the government of the Republic named a bridge in Paris in honor of the Russian Autocrat «Pont Alexandre III», and in Russia, where the Marseillaise, a song of revolution, was strictly forbidden, at the wish of the Czar it was permitted to play the Marseillaise, but not to sing it.

The setting for World War I was taking definite shape and Europe was rapidly approaching a catastrophe.

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(3) The wife of Czar Alexander III, Empress Maria Fedorovna, formerly Princess Dagmar of Denmark, hated Germans. In 1864, Prussia forced Denmark to give up Schleswig-Holstein, and this principality was annexed by Prussia. There was no question that the former Danish princess exercised a considerable influence over her husband and to a great degree was responsible for the creation of the Franco-Russian alliance.

Note of the Author.

## GOVERNOR - GENERAL OF FINLAND

### CHAPTER XV

Nussia's friend, Vera Rokassowsky, was graduated from St. Petersburg Conservatory at approximately the same time that Nussia was graduated from Smolny. Vera was in the class of Composition, where mostly future conductors and band leaders were studying.

Many regiments had their own orchestras, and the orchestra of Preobrajensky Regiment was one of the best. All famous musicians were sent there when they were inducted into the Army. Every regiment sent to St. Petersburg Conservatory a notice of a vacancy for a conductor, and the Conservatory's staff sorted out these vacancies among the students of the graduating class.

At that time the President of the Conservatory was Anton Rubinstein, a well-known composer who organized in St. Petersburg another opera theater which was called « Musical Drama ». The acoustics in a new theater were better than in Mariynsky. Twice a week, Anton Rubinstein lectured on the theory of composition, and Vera attended his lectures with special interest.

The presence of a girl whose family was prominent in St. Petersburg society in the class of composition was quite unusual. The other students, mostly men, did not bother Vera with questions, but her social friends joked about it, and since Vera could not make a career of a regiment's conductor, they insisted that Vera expected to become a famous composer.

Vera withstood the teasing stoically and quietly explained to her friends that her health did not permit her to exercise on a piano for more than three hours a day. It was sufficient for a student of the composition class, while the future pianists had to exercise on a piano eight hours a day, and even longer.

Vera was very happy when she received her graduation certificate. All jokes about her career as a composer were to stop now, but shortly after her graduation her life was marred by a deep sorrow. Her governess, Miss Davenhill, who was closer to her than her own mother, died at the age of eighty-two, leaving all her savings to Vera's brother, Alexander, her favorite.

As a young girl, Miss Davenhill became a governess in the family of Furst zu Waldeck and Pyrmont, and stayed with this family for many years. She came to Russia in 1836, at the time the first child was born to Vera's parents. Vera's father was the Chief of Staff of Count Alexander Perovsky, Governor-General of Orenburg.

Miss Davenhill stayed with the Rokassowsky family during the years in which Vera's brothers and sisters grew up, and married. By the time Vera, the youngest, grew up, Miss Davenhill had become a member of the family and had no desire to return to England. And now she had died, and Vera felt a terrible loneliness. Her mother, the dowager Baroness Rokassowsky, continued to live in St. Petersburg in the same apartment on Fontanks. The principal interest in the life of the old Baroness was still her daily card game with some of her friends who were of the same age, such as the Prince of Mingrelia, Baron Tiesenhausen, and her distant relative, Baroness von Alftan.

Life in St. Petersburg usually started late. Banks opened at ten o'clock, the government offices opened at eleven, but the high officials did not appear in their offices before one or two o'clock in the afternoon. Women of society would arise even later, and were not ready to go out before five o'clock in the afternoon. Evening parties lasted practically all night through. An invitation for supper meant that the guests were not to arrive before two o'clock in the morning. If the guests arrived earlier, they

would find that their host and hostess were still at the theater.

There was a logical explanation for this. St. Petersburg was so far north that in the winter it was still dark at eight o'clock in the morning. All streets were lighted until almost eleven o'clock. The day was very short, and streets were usually lighted again at half-past two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Nobody liked to get up in the dark. Consequently, in St. Petersburg everything was later than usual; dinner was served at eight, or later, and supper at two or three in the morning, or even later. Therefore, it was not surprising that the old Baroness Rokassowsky and her friends played cards until six or seven o'clock in the morning practically every day. A supper was served them between three and four o'clock in the morning, and the Baroness insisted that her daughter Vera play the hostess's role.

While Miss Davenhill was alive, she replaced Vera quite often, and Vera could go to bed at a reasonable hour, but when Miss Davenhill died there was no one to replace Vera, and she felt extremely tired when she arose in the morning. She was getting up early because she did not want to spend her days in bed. She tried to speak to her mother but the old Baroness was very dictatorial and did not want to listen to her arguments. Finally, Vera revolted against this life with her domineering mother (and two Boulognese dogs) and announced that she was going to the country.

By that time the Rokassowsky family estates were divided among Vera's brothers, and she had no intention of imposing on them and their families for any length of time. There was one estate which, after the death of her husband, the Baroness had kept for herself as her share as a widow. It was «Komchanskaia Rudnia», in the province of Mogilev. It consisted of twelve and a half thousand acres of centuries-old forest. Unfortunately, there was no suitable house to live in.

Vera rented a house on the estate «Puchkovo» which was situated only about five miles north of the town of Nevel, and which belonged to Nicholas Shishko. Mr. Shishko had an administrative position in the Department of Imperial



Theaters in St. Petersburg, and was glad to rent the house of Puchkovo to Vera whose family he knew well. This house stood only about a quarter of a mile from the St. Petersburg-Vitebsk highway and was surrounded by other buildings of the estate. Vera could keep her own horses and a carriage there, and besides her own servants, other people lived nearby. It actually was not some remote place and she did not need to be afraid living alone there.

In the spring of 1891, Vera moved to Puchkovo. At that time she was already thirty-seven years old — by Russian standards, an old spinster.

As an unmarried woman, she could not very well entertain the neighboring landowners, and was forced to live a most secluded life. Physically she was frail, and was continuously under a doctor's care.

My father called on her one day at the request of Nussia, who wanted to have news from her old friend, and was surprised to find her so thin and pale. She was certainly not well at all, and my father was sorry for her.

A few months later, my father happened to be in Nevel again, and on his way back to Kolpino he stopped to see Vera. He was informed by a maid that Vera was sick in bed, and could not receive him.

Many months passed before my father visited Puchkovo again; this time he found Vera sitting in a big chair in front of a fireplace in the livingroom. A heavy woolen shawl covered her shoulders, and she appeared weak. She was slowly recovering from pneumonia. Doctor Talavrinoff, whom my father knew well, was there, too. My father did not stay long, and left the house together with the doctor who told him confidentially that Vera had been seriously ill and that for some time he had not expected her to live.

My father wondered why Vera was always so lonely; he wondered about her brothers and sisters and found out that her oldest sister Elisabeth was a widow and was living with her daughter in Switzerland. Another sister, Olga, was married, and lived with her husband in Peterhof, near St. Petersburg. Her brother Alexander was somewhere in Europe, and her brother Vladimir was Vice-Governor of the Pro-

vince of Pensa, quite a distance from Nevel. Only her youngest brother Alexis lived on the estate «Dubokrai» near Vitebsk. My father knew him slightly. He was a thoughtless fellow, a former officer of a Hussar regiment, married now but well known for his drinking bouts. The income he received from the estate of some fifteen thousand acres was not sufficient to cover his reckless spending. He mortgaged Dubokrai and continued to borrow money from Jewish lenders. He was in serious financial difficulties.

And here was Vera, so reserved, so decent and so lonely!

Vera's father, Platon Rokassowsky, born in 1800 in Riga, made a brilliant military career. Although only twelve years old, at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, he was already commissioned an officer (ensign). He took part in the Russo-Turkish War of 1829, in the capture of Adrianopol and later in the wars in Caucasus where he received the dagger of St. George with the inscription «For bravery».

At the age of thirty-six, he was already a Major-General and the Chief of Staff of the Governor-General of Orenburg. In 1840, he took part in the campaign of Count Perovsky in Central Asia. For this campaign he received the Cross of St. George, the highest Russian decoration for bravery on the field of battle. And it was in Orenburg that he met Miss Alexandra Kuzminsky, his future wife.

Miss Kuzminsky was a daughter of an unknown Colonel Vasili Kuzminsky of lesser gentry who was stationed in Orenburg. Her mother was Elisabeth Kamayev of a Tatar family, born in Siberia. Numerous oil paintings and portraits depicted Miss Kuzminsky as a very beautiful girl.

They were married in 1835, and the following year their first son was born. Platon Rokassowsky immediately engaged an English and a French governess for his son. The young mother, who was fourteen years younger than her husband, started to study French with the French governess. In Russia at that time it was considered a disgrace not to speak French fluently. The marriage of Platon Rokassowsky was certainly a mesalliance.

In 1848, he was appointed Assistant-Governor General of Finland and moved with his family to Helsingfors. He



*Платон Иванович*

Генералъ - губернаторъ  
П. Рокасовскій.

*Baron Platon Rokassowsky,  
Governor-General of Finland.*

From a portrait by A. Makovsky, photo from  
the book «History of Finland» by M. M. Bo-  
rodin, New York Public Library.



bought two estates in Finland - Degerö near Helsingfors, and Kirjola near Wyborg. The Governor-General of Finland, Prince Alexander Sergejevich Menshikoff, a direct descendant of the favorite of Czar Peter Great, Prince Alexander Danilovich Menshikoff, lived in St. Petersburg, and the administration of the Grand Duchy was left to Rokassowsky. Platon Rokassowsky was an exceedingly well-educated man, and although a soldier, was liberal and very tactful. In a short time he became very popular in Finland.

On the 6th of December, 1854, Count Friedrich von Berg was appointed the Governor-General of Finland and replaced Prince Menshikoff at this post. Rokassowsky was appointed a member of the Council of the Empire and moved to St. Petersburg. As a matter of fact, an appointment to the Council of the Empire was not a promotion; it was equivalent to being « put out to pasture ». Rokassowsky was too liberal to suit the Imperial government of Czar Nicholas I

Rokassowsky left Finland with a heavy heart. He had learned to love this little contry in the north, and its people, so honest and industrious, and the population of the Grand Duchy deeply regretted seeing him leave.

As a token of gratitude for his liberal rule, the Senate of Finland addressed a petition to the Czar asking to grant Rokassowsky a baronial title of the Grand Duchy of Finland. This petition was granted.

It was at the time of the Great Reforms of the Czar-Emancipator (in 1861) that Rokassowsky was appointed to replace Count von Berg as Governor-General of Finland. The Finns were jubilant and at their request Rokassowsky entered Helsingfors after dark. All streets of the city were filled with gay crowds, and the population arranged a torchlight procession in his honor. Rokassowsky carried orders from the Czar to prepare a new constitution for Finland.

It took two years of work and finally, in 1863, Czar Alexander II, with all members of his family, and the Imperial Court, arrived in Helsingfors for the opening of the first Finnish Parliament (Seim). At the opening ceremony, the Czar delivered his speech in French, the language used in international relations, and this gesture of the liberal Russian Sovereign gave to every Finn an additional assurance

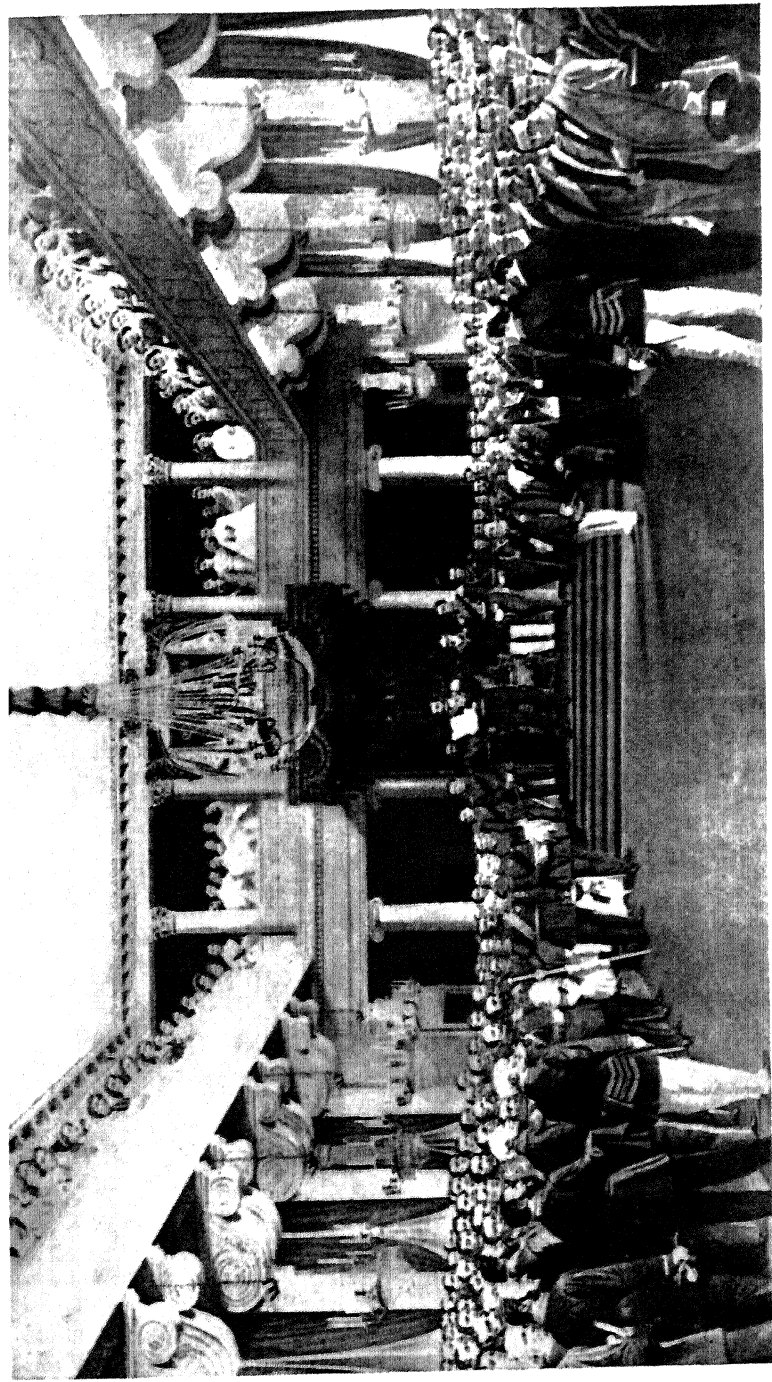
that his country was actually a separate dominion of the Russian Empire, with its own constitution, administration, code of laws, monetary unit (Finnish Mark instead of Russian Rouble), Post and Telegraph and Custom Houses along the entire Finnish border.

The population of the Grand Duchy was jubilant. The streets in Helsingfors were decorated with flags and the initials of the Czar. In the evening there were tremendous fireworks, and at the Governor-General Palace, Baron Rokassowsky gave a ball in honor of the Russian Sovereign. According to the court etiquette, the ball was opened by a polonaise, and the leading couple were the Czar and Baroness Rokassowsky. Behind them, Baron Rokassowsky was the Empress's partner, and they were followed by the Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses and members of the Imperial suite.

At the age of sixty-eight, on doctor's orders, Rokassowsky presented his resignation. By that time he already had all the highest decorations of the Empire. On the occasion of his resignation, he received an edict from the Czar giving him seven thousand acres of fertile land in the Province of Samara.

The point was that the salaries of high government officials in Russia were inadequate for their actual needs. For instance, in order to live in the Governor-General's Palace and provide the necessary entertainment, Rokassowsky was forced to sell one of his estates because the salary he received did not cover all his expenses. Therefore, it was customary at the time of resignation to present a high government official with an estate in order to compensate him for the expenses which he had paid out of his personal resources.

The Senate of Finland presented Rokassowsky with an address in the form of a parchment scroll, from all provinces of the Grand Duchy. At the head of his scroll were imprinted in colors the arms of Finland — the golden Finnish lion holding a sword in the raised right paw. The address, written in Swedish, honored Rokassowsky's services rendered to the Grand Duchy and assured him of the undying devotion to him of the grateful population of Finland.



Opening of the first Finnish Parliament by the Czar Alexander II in 1863 in Helsingfors, Finland.  
Photograph from an artist's sketch (photography did not exist) in the book « History of Finland » by M. M. B.  
rodkin. The book is the property of the New York Public Library.







A ball at the Governor-General Palace in Helsingfors, Finland, on occasion of the opening of the First Finnish Parliament in 1863.

Czar Alexander II opened the ball dancing polonaise with Baroness Alexandra Rokasowsky, wife of the Governor-General of Finland, maternal grandmother of the author.

Photograph from an artist's sketch in the book «History of Finland» by M. M. Borodkin, New York Public Library.



After his resignation, Rokassowsky, with his entire family, took a trip abroad. They were staying in a hotel in the city of Nice when he died of a heart attack, in March, 1869. He was buried in the Russian cemetery in Nice.

## A FAMILY SQUABBLE

### CHAPTER XVI

Vera Rokassowsky was fourteen years old when her father died. She remembered him well, although as a child she did not see much of him.

Every morning after arranging her hair in two long tresses, and after being properly dressed, Vera was scrutinized by her French governess who conducted her into a big diningroom where her parents had their breakfast. She made a knicksen (curtsy) first to her father — « Bonjour, papà » — and she kissed his hand. He would stroke her hair and smile. Vera was the youngest of all his children, and as busy and preoccupied as he was, he always tried to be attentive and loving towards her.

Then, Vera made a knicksen to her mother — « Bonjour, mamà » — and she kissed her hand, too, but her mother did not caress her, and Vera did not expect it from her. They both appeared quite indifferent to each other.

After this brief ceremony, Vera sat at her place at the end of the table and kept quiet. She was not supposed to take any food other than that offered to her, and she was not supposed to talk at the table, even to ask for anything — not even another piece of toast, although often she was quite hungry.

After breakfast, Vera attended her lessons with the French governess and with Miss Davenhill, for whom she had a deep affection, and in whom she confided all her secrets. Every day, Vera had a music lesson. In the big

Governor-General Palace in Helsingfors where Vera was born was a room with a concert piano. This room was in the farthest corner of the building and was intended for the children of the Governor-General, where they could exercise without disturbing anyone. However, each child was permitted to stay in this room only one hour and to play only exercises, nothing else. The music lesson was followed usually by a dancing lesson, and finally, at some time in the afternoon, Vera was permitted to play with other children of her own age. In Finland, the nobility was Swedish, and all these children spoke Swedish. Vera learned to speak Swedish without any foreign accent, although she could not speak Russian at all.

After breakfast, Vera never saw her parents for the rest of the day. All children had their lunch and dinner under the supervision of their governesses and tutors in another diningroom and were not supposed to disturb their parents.

Over the week-ends, the whole family often went to their estate Degerö, situated on one of the islands in the vicinity of Helsingfors. Vera remembered a big Navy cutter with fourteen oars and an officer in command waiting for them at the pier, and when her father appeared, the officer gave crisp orders, the flag of Governor-General was raised, and all fourteen sailors started to row in unison. It was a short ride to the island, where the children ran and played to their hearts' content.

In winter the children enjoyed skating. In bad weather, Miss Davenhill forced them to take walks through the streets of the city for at least one hour every day.

Although the education and background of Baroness Alexandra Rokassowsky, a daughter of some unknown colonel stationed in Orenburg on the border of Asia, were entirely different from the back-ground and education of her husband, they appeared to be a happily married couple. Baroness Rokassowsky followed her husband's instructions to the letter, and became well versed in court etiquette, and in her duties as a wife of a Russian aristocrat and an important personage as her husband was. After thirty years of married life, she mastered French, and became one of the well-known hostesses in St. Petersburg and Helsingfors.

As the wife of the Governor-General of Finland, she refused to take any part in or even to lend her name to any charitable society in which prominent women were interested. From time immemorial, in all countries, it happened quite often that these societies had been managed badly, and money collected for charity was often misused. Baron Rokassowsky was proud of his name and reputation and did not want the name of his wife to be connected in any way with any rumour of improperly used public funds. Baroness Rokassowsky never questioned the authority of her husband. At his request, she left the education of her children entirely to the French and English governesses and tutors engaged by her husband. Perhaps this was the reason why she was not loved by the children.

At one of the receptions at the Winter Palace, Baron Rokassowsky presented his wife to Czar Nicholas I and the Empress, the former Princess Charlotte of Prussia. At the same reception, Baroness Rokassowsky was presented to the Cesarevitch, the future Czar Alexander II and his wife, Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna, the former Princess of Hesse. The Cesarevna liked Baroness Rokassowsky and they began to correspond, always in French, and their correspondence lasted some thirty years, until Empress Maria Alexandrovna died in 1880.

Baron Rokassowsky and his wife had nine children, but only seven reached maturity. Vera, born in 1854, was the youngest of the children.

After his resignation in 1868, Baron Rokassowsky with his entire family, accompanied by governesses, tutors, valets, and chambermaids, took a trip abroad. Only the oldest daughter, Elisabeth, remained with her husband in St. Petersburg.

Vera remembered well how she was called to her father's bedroom in the hotel where they were staying in Nice. She entered his room and was told to kneel by his bed. With great difficulty her father raised his hand blessed her and Vera kissed his hand for the last time. A few hours later he died.

At the request of the city authorities, his funeral took place at night time. Nice was a well-known resort where

many sick people lived. They were told by their doctors and relatives that the warm sunshine and soft breezes of the Mediterranean would give them back their strength and health, and they wanted to believe it. In order not to upset those who were still alive with gloomy spectacles, all funerals took place at night.

Late at night the coffin of Baron Rokassowsky was carried out of the hotel. All members of the family followed to the Russian cemetery, situated a few miles west of the center of the city. The Requiem service and the lowering of the coffin into the grave were conducted by the light of torches. This sombre spectacle made a great impression on Vera. She did not like the speed with which the Requiem service was conducted. It appeared to her that everybody, including the Russian priest, was trying to get through with this ceremony as fast as possible.

After ordering a large square tombstone of the size of the grave, with a marble plate on which were engraved the name, rank and dates of birth and death of the deceased, the family returned to Kirjola, an estate near Wyborg, in Finland, where they stayed for the summer. The young boys, Vladimir and Alexis, were sent immediately to the Corps des Pages, an exclusive military academy in St. Petersburg, where their older brothers, Platon and Alexander, received their education. Vera was enlisted in a private high school of Princess Obolensky. In the fall, Baroness Rokassowsky rented an apartment on Fontanka in St. Petersburg. For the first time, Vera was sent to a Russian school. She did not speak Russian at all, but no one anticipated any difficulties — Vera was in Russia now and it was taken for granted that she would speak her native tongue.

Baron Rokassowsky died without a will. He had been preoccupied with the affairs of the state and did not make any will while in Russia. The fatal heart attack found him unprepared. The absence of a will made the question of the estate he left very complicated.

According to Russian law, his widow was entitled to one-seventh of the entire estate. Each daughter was supposed to receive one-fourteenth part, and the rest of the estate was to be equally divided among all the sons. The law was quite

clear on the point of the division, but there was a question of appraisal.

Inheritance taxes were exceedingly small in Russia, and the government was not interested in a fair appraisal of the estate. Landed estates situated in different provinces were appraised by petty local officials who could be easily influenced. They were always eager to please and for a small consideration could appraise a certain property far below its market value.

The dowager Baroness Rokassowsky displayed an unusual interest in the settlement of the estate of her deceased husband. Many years passed before the final settlement was made, and as a reward for her undying interest, the two largest estates — «Komchanskaia Rudnia» and «Dubokrai» were awarded to her and to her youngest son Alexis, her favorite. For good measure, the estate Degerë, near Helsingfors in Finland, was added to the share of the widow.

«Dubokrai», a property even a little larger than «Komchanskaia Rudnia», in the province of Vitebsk, was awarded to Alexis, the youngest son of the deceased. There was a large and very comfortable house in Dubokrai. The house was two stories high, built of bricks and stone in a colonial style, on the shore of a big lake. The lake was so big that only on clear days was the opposite shore visible. Vera's father maintained on this lake a couple of racing yachts. There was a park around the house and other buildings. The estate brought a very comfortable income.

«Komchanskaia Rudnia» and «Dubokrai» were two estates which Prince Alexander Wiazemsky, with the approval of Empress Catherine the Great, presented to Vera's grandfather, Ivan Rokassowsky, who was his natural son. The third estate, «Dombrovo», also presented by Prince Wiazemsky, and the largest of them all, was sold by Vera's grandfather.

The portion received by the mother and her favorite son represented the lion's share of the entire estate, but the authority of the dowager Baroness Rokassowsky among her children remained indisputable and nobody protested.

Vera and her sister Olga received as their share seven thousand acres in the province of Samara, an estate «by



the Brook Karambulatka » as it was described officially in the grant of Czar Alexander II made to Vera's father at the time of his resignation. Both sisters were supposed to be content to receive three and a half thousand acres each, somewhere on the border of Asia, where the value of land at that time was very low.

Surprisingly for Vera, her studies in Princess Obolensky's school for girls proceeded without any difficulties. All the teachers in this school as well as all her classmates spoke French fluently. Within a few months, Vera began to speak Russian, and with the years to come, she learned Russian thoroughly, but she never got rid of a slight foreign accent.

Vera finished the school of Princess Obolensky at the age of nineteen. In the fall of the same year, her mother arranged to present her to the Imperial Court at a ball given at the Winter Palace.

While Vera, according to court etiquette, was making a deep «reverence» to the Czar and the Empress Maria Alexandrovna, her mother found time to point out to the Czar that she still had an unmarried daughter who had to be launched into society and she, the poor widow, needed for this reason an additional income. The Czar smiled at Vera and said a few words to her mother. Vera did not hear what he said, but by the expression on Baroness Rokassowsky's face, she understood that her petition was successful.

A few weeks later, Vera's mother was notified that His Imperial Majesty the Czar decreed to give her an additional pension of six thousand roubles a year. For some reason, this additional pension was called a «rent» (in Russian «Arenda»).

As soon as Baroness Rokassowsky received this news, she forgot completely about the existence of her unmarried daughter. She did not pay any more attention to Vera than she did to her maid or her butler. In her apartment on Fontanka, she received only people of her own age and devoted most of her time to her two Boulognese dogs and to her daily card game.

Vera had a few friends of her own whom she met while she was in the fashionable school of Princess Obolensky, and these friends invited her to different parties, but due to

the fact that Vera's mother never arranged any party for the young people, Vera was unable to reciprocate, and the invitations to her became fewer every season until they stopped altogether.

In the meantime, the Rokassowsky family was again in mourning on account of the tragic death of Vera's oldest brother, Platon. Platon was at that time a major of the Preobrajensky Regiment, and an aid-de-camp of the Czar. He was married to Sophia Saburoff, a girl of a very old Russian Boyar family. He and his wife had an apartment in the Winter Palace facing Millionaia Street and Zimnaia Kanavka, where the First Company of his regiment was stationed.

Platon, like his late father, was making a brilliant military career. Unfortunately, he was very much in love with his wife, who was a very shallow woman. His wife had been flirting with all his friends. All her dresses had décolleté lower than usual. She was mean to her husband, and Platon realized that they did not suit each other. But he was much too proud to divorce her. Besides, according to a strongly established tradition, in case of divorce he had to resign from his regiment. All this made him very unhappy.

One morning his feeling of despair was so intense that he climbed on a window sill of his apartment and cut his throat with a razor. The window was open, and he fell down from the second floor on the sidewalk of Zimnaia Kanavka. When soldiers rushed to him, he was already dead.

Vera adored her oldest brother and his death caused a great sorrow. At the time of death of her brother Platon, Vera was twenty-two years old.

A couple of eligible young men made proposals of marriage to Vera but she refused. She was convinced that she could only marry a man with whom she was in love. She read all the novels of Thanckeray, Balzac, George Sand, and all the English and French novelists. She adored Russian Imperial Ballet and went quite often to Maryinsky Theater. She witnessed the triumph of Adelina Patti, a famous Italian coloratura-soprano who sang at that time in St. Petersburg.

In a few years, Vera became quite independent. She was never afraid to travel alone, and learned to smoke,

which was unheard of then, and was greatly criticized. She read newspapers, and became interested in politics.

At the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, her brother Vladimir Rokassowsky, also an officer of Preobrajensky Regiment, enlisted as an « Esaul » (pronounced Essa-oul, a major in the Cossack regiment) of His Majesty's Escort and took part in this campaign. He received several decorations for bravery and was made aid-de-camp of the Czar. Vera's sister Olga became a nurse and was sent with a detachment of the Red Cross to the fighting front.

Vera read the official communiqués and followed closely the events of this campaign. Like thousands of other girls in Russia, she adored the Czar-Emancipator and was proud to be a Russian. The slight foreign accent she had was a cause of great annoyance and embarrassment to her, especially in this period of her life.

It was unbearable for Vera to continue to lead an idle life, and she decided to enter the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Four years later the studies were over, and she was again facing the same problem — what to dedicate her life to? This problem Vera was unable to solve, but the death of Miss Davenhill made her life in St. Petersburg still more depressing, and she decided to move to the country.

She would have moved to her own estate in the province of Samara, but it was much too far. The estate « by the Brook Karambulatka » was situated in the Kirghiz steppes, some one hundred miles from the city of Samara, and about seventy-five miles from the city of Uralsk. The nearest railroad station was at Samara. Besides, the entire estate had only one small building — a four-room house occupied by the superintendent who lived there only a few months each year while the fields were seeded and until the crop was collected. It was a most primitive system. The entire estate was divided in five equal portions; these portions rotated... only one portion was seeded with wheat each year. Four other portions of the estate were left fallow. The estate was situated in the so-called « black soil belt » and the fields were never fertilized. The crop depended entirely upon sufficient rain. A dry summer could easily produce a drought, and the entire crop would perish. Therefore, the annual

income from this estate was very uncertain. There could be a loss — expenses on seeding the fields, but, on the other hand, in good years when the rainfalls were sufficient, the estate brought a considerable income. The wheat seeded on this estate was of the highest quality, so-called «beloturka».

Actually, it was the first attempt to plough the «virgin soil», the steppes that had never been cultivated before. Russian steppes were covered with feather grass, called «kovyl». This feather grass had very deep roots and prevented the soil from being blown by the wind into huge black clouds at the time of a drought. At that time, Russians were careful not to plow more than one-fifth of the available land, in order not to deprive the soil of the protection provided by nature.

Vera moved to the house of Puchkovo in the province of Vitebsk. Unfortunately for her, a few months later she contracted pneumonia and for a couple of weeks was lying in bed with a high fever, unconscious. Doctor Talavrinoff who visited her daily did not expect her to live, but finally her healthy constitution helped her to pull through.

Her recovery took a long time. First she was permitted to sit in the livingroom, but with the coming warm weather the doctor permitted her to sit on a couch outside, warmly dressed and covered by woolen blankets. Finally, she was allowed to take daily walks.

The house of Puchkovo stood only about a mile from the highway and there was a wide road leading from the highway to the house. This road was always kept in perfect order and Vera usually walked along this road. She had to pass by the farriery where Jankel, a blacksmith, was always working. Jankel was a tall, heavy-set Jew who greeted Vera always with a friendly smile.

Jews were usually traders, insurance agents, or hotel and tavern keepers, and Jankel represented an exception to his race. One day Vera noticed that every now and then Jankel walked out of his farriery to the highway, raised his right hand to his forehead, protecting his eyes from the sunlight, and took a good look in the direction of Nevel, only about five or six miles distant. Vera became curious and asked Jankel what he was looking for.

« I look » Jankel answered with a question. « I look — is Nevel burning already? »

Vera did not understand. « What do you mean, Jankel? Should Nevel burn today? ».

« Yes », answered Jankel, « it is time for Nevel to burn ».

The fact was that practically all Jewish towns and communities in Russia burned down periodically, and after each fire better houses were built in place of the old ones. Needless to say, all houses owned by the Jews were heavily insured against fire. Periodic fires which destroyed Jewish towns were a well-known fact and yet it was exceedingly difficult to prove that these fires were started intentionally. A most rigid investigation conducted by the insurance companies in a labyrinth of narrow passages between old wooden buildings, with old rags hanging out of the windows, could not determine the cause of fire, and the insurance money was paid out. However, the fact remained that there were never any human victims in these fires, and the Jewish owners of the houses which were burned down completely usually managed to save all their personal belongings.

Vera Rokassowsky was very lonesome. She did not visit anyone and entertained very little herself. She spent most of her time playing the piano and reading. But Doctor Talavrinoff warned her not to tire her eyes too much and to limit her reading to only about one hour daily. Under these conditions, Vera was glad when a few neighboring landowners and their wives came to visit her.

Vera became very fond of the old Princess Maria Romadanovsky-Lodyjensky. At the time when Czar Peter the Great went to Holland where he was working as a common shipwright on the wharves at Zaandam, a direct ancestor of the Princess was made a Regent of Russia with the title of « Prince-Caesar ». While the Czar was working on the wharves, and visiting factories, picture galleries, anatomical theatres, commercial and other institutions in Western Europe, trying to learn everything he could, Prince Romadanovsky occupied the Russian throne in his place.

Princess Maria, an old spinster, was the last in line of Princes Romadanovsky-Lodyjensky. Her estate « Zivilevo »

was heavily mortgaged and the poor woman was in financial difficulties.

Vera wanted to help her, and on one of the rare occasions when my father visited Puchkovo, Vera asked him for his advice. My father wrote a petition to the Czar for the Princess. As a result of this petition, the Czar was gracious enough to order all debts of the Princess to be paid out of his own purse, and she was granted a pension sufficient to take care of her modest needs.

Unfortunately, this relief in her financial troubles came much too late. The Princess received the good news while she was visiting Vera in Puchkovo. Shortly afterwards, she became ill. Vera immediately called Doctor Talavrinoff whose office was in Nevel. He found that Princess Maria had a serious heart ailment and ordered her to bed. The Princess wanted to go back to her estate Zivilevo, but in the opinion of the doctor this trip, because of her weak heart, could be fatal.

The Princess remained in Puchkovo, either lying in bed or sitting in a big, comfortable chair. Her dog, an Irish terrier, slept at the foot of her bed every night, and during the day never left her side.

Two months passed, but the condition of the Princess did not improve. Every day Vera spent several hours in the room of the Princess, sitting by her bed and reading to her, trying to comfort the old, lonely woman. One evening, the Irish terrier of the Princess disappeared. The servants looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Finally, he was discovered in one of the livingrooms, far from his mistress's bedroom. The dog refused to come out from under a sofa where he was hiding. That same night the old Princess passed away.

The misfortune of Princess Romadanovsky, her illness and her death brought my father closer to Puchkovo and to Vera Rokassowsky. Gradually his visits to Puchkova became more frequent. He enjoyed Vera's company. She was well read and an interesting companion. She could ride well, and quite often they rode together, galloping through the fields, meadows and forests. It required all the skill of an expert



*Vera von Wrangell, born Baroness  
Rokassowsky, mother of the author*





rider to follow Vera who loved to let her horse run at full speed.

The Puchkovo house was very comfortable, and there was a billiard room. Vera and my father played pool together, or a more serious game of chess. It was quite natural that they both fell in love with each other, and decided to get married, but my father's wife Emilia stubbornly refused to give him a divorce. Besides, Vera's mother and all her brothers and sisters were decidedly against her marriage to a man who was already married twice, and not even divorced from the second wife yet! They declared that it was a disgrace that their sister was the cause for a divorce.

Finally my father was prompted to take a drastic step. One day, or rather one night, he returned to Kolpino, as was his habit, and the following morning he had a stormy discussion with Emilia. He offered her a generous settlement for her agreement to a divorce. Otherwise, he threatened to make her life miserable. He was so determined that eventually Emilia gave in.

According to a written agreement, Emilia was to remain the sole mistress of the Kolpino house for the rest of her life, and the office of the estate was to pay out to her a large sum of money annually for her personal needs.

A divorce was granted within a few months, and my father and Vera Rokassowsky were married. Immediately after the wedding, they went by train to Moscow, and from there to Crimea, to the shores of the Black Sea.

## THE BOXER UPRISING

### CHAPTER XVII

In 1895, my father and his third wife went to Yalta, and settled there. At that time, Yalta, the so-called « Russian Nice » was a small town on the shore of the Black Sea. The combination of the sea and the high mountains covered with pine forests presented a gorgeous background for the small town that was built on terraces up the mountainside. The mountains, approximately three thousand feet high, protected Yalta from the cold northern winds. On the south side of the mountains the temperature rarely reached the freezing point, and while the tops of the mountains were still covered with snow in May and the beginning of June, at the base of the mountains by the shore grew cypresses, mahogany trees, rhododendrons and even some varieties of palms. The palms were not native to Crimea; they were planted. The blooming acacia trees, magnolia, wisteria and roses filled the air with a subtropical aroma.

The original population of Crimea was of Tatar origin. The old Khans of Crimea had been vassals of the Sultans of Turkey, and Crimea was acquired by Russia comparatively recently, at the time of the reign of Empress Catherine the Great, in 1783.

Back in the classic age, Herodotus described many Greek colonies on the shores of the Black Sea, situated near the present towns of Kerch, Feodosia, Eupatoria, Sebastopol, Kherson and others. There were many Greeks living there before the First World War.

In the early part of the Middle Ages, the powerful city of Genoa, competing with her rival, the Republic of Venice, established colonies on the peninsula of Crimea, and one could still see the fortresses which had been built to protect the trade of this maritime republic.

The combination of Greeks, Italians, and Tatars produced a special race of the Crimean Tatars. They were Mohammedans, faithful to the Prophet, with their mosques and mullahs, and at the same time, had the features (straight eyelids) of the Aryan race. They abstained from liquor, respected the old traditions of the East, and were extremely honest. Many of them were very handsome.

To the east of Yalta, along the sea shores, were situated the estates Massandra and Nikitsky-Gardens, which belonged to the Department of Appanages, and the estate « Selam » of Count Orloff-Dovidoff. Further away was the village of Gursuf, with a Genoese fortress built on a big rock extending into the sea. From the ruins of this old fortress, one had a beautiful view of the mountain Ayu-Dag. The mountain had the form of a bear and jutted far out into the sea. The estates of Prince Murat and of Prince Bagration were situated close together here. Their ancestors had been enemies during the Napoleon campaign of 1812. In the moonlight of warm Crimean summer nights, the ruins of the old fortress, the graceful cypresses, and the outline of the Ayu-Dag, resembling a huge animal bending over into the sea, could easily be compared to a scene from Scheherazade. It was so beautiful that it seemed unreal.

To the west from Yalta, about one or two miles, were situated two large estates of the Czar - Livadia and Oreanda. The latter estate had been acquired by the Czar from the Grand Duke Constantin Nicholayevitch, after the palace on this estate was burned down. The fire occurred in 1881, shortly after the assassination of the Czar-Emancipator.

Further on was situated Haracks, an estate of Grand Duke George Michailovitch, the estate Dulber of the Grand Duke Peter Nichailovitch, the estate Ay-Todor of the Grand Duke Alexander Michailovitch and the beautiful estate Alupka of Count Worontzoff-Dashkoff, the late Viceroy of the Caucasus.

Different parts of Alupka's palace were built in dif-

ferent styles. The wide marble staircases descending to the sea, with six marble statues of lions on guard, together with the Arabic architecture of the side of the palace facing the sea, reminded one of the Alhambra. Beyond the palace rose the high rocks of Ay-Petri. This tremendous rock ended the semi-circle that enclosed Yalta from the north.

Yalta was an ideal place for two people in love who were trying to forget their unfortunate past and, at their advanced age, to start a new life. When about a year later a son was born to Vera, their happiness reached a culminating point.

I was born on the twentieth of May, according to the old Russian (Julian) calendar, or on the first of June, according to the European (Gregorian) calendar, 1896. My first memories were connected with Crimea, the sweet aroma of wisteria and magnolia blossoms and the rhythmic sound of the waves...

My mother adored me. I was her first-born, and I came when she was already forty-two years old! She worried constantly about my health. The morning would start with calling a doctor and asking him if the weather was warm enough for her little Carl to go out, and on what side of the house her offspring should play? Then, the next hour was devoted to dressing him in a sufficiently warm suit. Little Carl did not like it and resisted as much as he could. Then, very strict instructions were given to the nurse to watch the boy carefully and not to permit him to do any mischief.

As a result of this careful attention, I had pneumonia twice. One case was so severe that I nearly died.

Every evening my mother would read to me before I fell asleep. She usually read books on history. Being the only child and always among grown-ups, I was well-informed for my age. When I was only eight years old, I surprised my elders with my knowledge of historical events, names and dates. Having an excellent memory, I knew by heart chapters of poetry, especially of Pushkin and Lermontoff, Russia's two greatest poets.

Sometimes in the evenings, when I was comfortably tucked into my little bed, my mother played the piano,

playing the sonatas of Beethoven and nocturnes and valse of Chopin.

I remember my father, holding himself very erect, with silver streaks in his thick hair. He was always tender and kind to me.

Many years later, I learned that my parents came to Yalta intending to stay only a few months, but the beauty of the place made them want to stay there indefinitely and finally they built an entirely new life there. My father bought a piece of land in Kekeneiz, on the seashore, with the intention of building a villa there some day. He became a member of the local club and played « besigue » and « wint » there at least four or five evenings every week.

My mother took prolonged walks along the quai and in the Yalta public gardens every day. During the summer season in this public garden an orchestra played every evening, mostly light music, Viennese valse, but occasionally arias from different operas and classical music which my mother liked so much. My mother was very fond of reading French and English novels, and I always remember her sitting in a chair with a book in her hands.

I remember the Boer War. The sympathies of the Russians were decidedly on the side of the Boers and Mr. Kruger. I remember a little song which Russian boys of my age used to sing at that time:

« Mama, buy for me a sabre and a drum,

I shall go to Africa to beat up the English... ».

I remember the Boxer Uprising of 1900, which was very frightening, and which was caused by the greed of European powers, including Mother-Russia.

On the 20th of October, 1894, Emperor Alexander III died in the old Livadia Palace in Crimea, and on the throne ascended his son, Czar Nicholas II, who was at that time only twenty-six years old. The young Czar married Princess Alix of Hesse and Rhine, who became Empress Alexandra of Russia.

Right from the beginning, the young Czar displayed the characteristics of his ancestor, Emperor Alexander I — mysticism, cunning, and even perfidy. However, Emperor

Alexander I was one of the best educated men of his time. Practically all diplomatic acts of his reign were written in a rough draft by the Czar himself. On the other hand, the education of Czar Nicholas II was not above average. Czar Nicholas II had beautiful manners, gracious, polite and attentive at all times; his innate charm produced an effect, without fail, on everybody who met him for the first time. His memory for faces and names was remarkable, and he used it to his advantage. He had great poise. He was rather good-hearted, but actually, outside of his immediate family, he did not love anyone and did not cherish anything. As a result, he had no real friends.

He signed the abdication without any struggle or regret. The thought that he, the captain, was abandoning his ship at the time of danger, did not occur to him. He declared that he would like to go to Livadia to devote his time to his favorite hobby — planting flowers...

In his every-day demands, he was very modest, but he had no knowledge of human nature and could not evaluate correctly the people around him. Possibly, as a constitutional monarch, Czar Nicholas II would have been popular among his subjects, but, unfortunately, for Russia, he had no makings of an Autocrat of a huge Empire.

From the beginning of his reign, he was considerably influenced by the members of the Imperial family, his mother, his uncles, and cousins. The Grands Dukes interfered in the affairs of state which did not concern them at all and exercised a disastrous influence on the Czar.

At the time of his accession to the throne, the war between China and Japan was in progress. Japan successfully invaded Manchuria and had captured Wei-hai-wei and Port Arthur. According to the Peace Treaty of Shimonoseki, China ceded to Japan Formosa, Pescadores Islands, and the Liaotung Peninsula.

At that time, the Trans-Siberian Railway extended already to Irkutsk, and the question was how to build it further to Vladivostok — in a roundabout way along the northern bank of the Amour River, or in a much shorter way, through the Chinese territory of northern Manchuria?

The Russian government had no hopes of obtaining the consent of the Chinese government to build the railway through Manchuria, but the young Czar, who as the Heir-Apparent had visited Japan, envisaged an extension of Russian influence in the Far East. On the advice of Serge Witte, a top statesman of his time, Russia adopted a policy of preserving the integrity of China, and received necessary support from Germany and France. These three powers presented an ultimatum forcing Japan to evacuate the Liaotung Peninsula, preventing her from acquiring any territory on the continent of Asia.

In June, 1896, the Russian government signed an agreement with Li Hung-Chang, an outstanding Chinese statesman, who at that time arrived in Moscow for the coronation of Czar Nicholas II. This agreement was actually a defensive alliance between Russia and China against Japan. At the same time, Russia received a concession for the building of a continuation of the Trans-Siberian Railways across northern Manchuria. This concession was granted to the Russo-Chinese Bank, which, in turn, passed it to the Eastern Chinese Railway, a corporation formed for this purpose.

The old Dowager-Empress of China valued this defensive agreement with Russia, which, from her point of view, was to preserve the integrity of China, to such an extent that she did not trust a copy of this agreement to anyone, and kept it in her bedroom.

However, the other European powers were unwilling to swallow the fact that Russia received a concession from China, and in 1897, Germany seized Tsingtao.

In direct violation of the agreement signed with Li Hung-Chang, and regardless of the protests of Serge Witte, Russia occupied Port Arthur and Dairen, and forced China to lease to Russia the portion of Liaotung Peninsula which included these two ports. Great Britain received concessions on the Burmese frontier and acquired Wei-hai-wei. Every power was anxious to get a slice of the Chinese melon. Russia, Germany and Great Britain did just what they did not want Japan to do, and Russia occupied that part of Liaotung

Peninsula which a few years previously Japan had been forced to abandon!

In order to appease Japan, in April, 1898, Russia signed an agreement with the Japanese Empire leaving Korea to Japanese influence. For the time being, Japan appeared to be satisfied.

The Boxer movement, which originated in the south of China, was spreading to the north, and finally broke out with violence in Peking. The nationalist-minded Chinese started to loot European embassies in Peking, with the usual Chinese cruelty, killing some foreigners. The Boxer Uprising had a slogan, « Protect the country, destroy the foreigners! ».

Russian troops were the first to enter Peking. They were supported by the Japanese, and, later on by the troops of other European powers. The Dowager-Empress and the Emperor fled, and the well-known Imperial Palace at Peking, with its priceless art and gem treasures, was looted. Unfortunately, the Russian troops took part in this looting.



## THE REIGN OF CZAR NICHOLAS II

### CHAPTER XVIII

With the accession to the throne of Czar Nicholas II, the domestic policy of the Russian government changed very little. The young Czar was more tolerant of the foreign names of some of his subjects, but on the whole, the Slavophiles and the Slavophil ideas continued to have the same domineering influence.

It was due partly to the influence of Constantin Pobedonostsev, Procurator of the Holy Synod, and some other Slavophiles, and partly to the deep feeling of respect and adoration which Czar Nicholas II had for the memory of his late father. This feeling he often carried to an extreme.

While he was the Heir-Apparent, with the rank of a subaltern officer, Nicholas was appointed an aide-de-camp to his father and wore the initials of the late Emperor on his epaulettes. According to army regulations, with the promotion to the rank of a general, the initials of the Czar were removed from the epaulettes of the aide-de-camp, unless he was promoted at the same time to the rank of General of the Suite.

At the moment of the death of his father, Czar Nicholas II was still a colonel. By the orders of the Army, he could have been promoted to a four-star general, or even to Field Marshal, but he wanted to keep the initials of his late father on his shoulder straps, and therefore remained a colonel for the rest of his life.

In 1896, General Sheremeteff, Viceroy of the Caucasus, presented his resignation because of old age. In his place,

Prince Gregory Galitzine was appointed. The new Viceroy ignored completely the character and traditions of the various races which inhabited this region and proceeded to « russify » the Caucasus by very harsh measures.

At that time, as a result of prosecutions by the government of Sultan Abdul-Hamid, thousands of Armenians moved from Turkey to the Russian Caucasus. In his ardent desire to make a « true orthodox Russian » out of every subject of the Czar, Prince Galitzine became especially severe towards Armenians.

The Armenians who moved from Turkey were experienced revolutionaries and proceeded immediately to instruct in this art their brothers who were born on the Russian side of the border.

There were a number of cases of violence. In retaliation, Prince Galitzine recommended that the Russian government would confiscate the properties of the Armenian Church.

Due to the fact that there was only a slight dogmatic difference between the Armenian Church and the Russian Orthodox (Greek Catholic) Church, the majority of members of the cabinet were opposed to this measure, realizing the hypocrisy of it. However, with the support of Constantin Pobedonostsev and of Vyacheslav Plehve, at that time Secretary of the Interior, this measure was approved by the Czar.

There was an attempt on Prince Galitzine's life and the unrest in the Caucasus became general. Finally Prince Galitzine was recalled to St. Petersburg, and Count Worontzoff-Dashkoff was appointed in his place. The new Viceroy discontinued the policy of « russification » and oppression of the natives. On his recommendation, the sequestration of the Armenian Church's properties was stopped, and he succeeded in pacifying the Caucasus. However, the greater part of the properties of the Armenian Church had already been confiscated.

« Russification » of the Grand Duchy of Finland was entrusted to General Bobrikov who was appointed Governor-General of Finland. The original constitution granted to the Finns in 1809 was confirmed by Czar Alexander II in 1872, and even by his successor, Czar Alexander III, in 1881. For

Alexander III it was not a question of policy but of honor. Once a constitution was granted, he continued to stick to it. He asked the Finns for a union of customs, currency and postal service, but the Finnish Diet was reluctant to accede to it. Alexander III did not insist.

In 1899, an Ukase, from Czar Nicholas II gave to the Russian government the right to supervise all laws concerning the Grand Duchy which affected the interests of the empire. The official Finnish journal refused to publish the Ukase. The Finns claimed that it was contrary to the existing constitution. They were opposed to the use of the Russian language in schools and government offices and to a new form of oath established for the Finns by the Russian government. Discontent grew and ended with the assassination of General Bobrikov in 1904.

Poland, under the very liberal rule of Prince Imeretinsky, Viceroy of Poland, escaped this process of « russification », but a strong Socialist-Democratic Party of Poland was organized with Joseph Pilsudski, the future Marshal and dictator of Poland, as one of its leaders.

At this time a very hostile attitude was displayed by the Russian government towards the Jews. The policy of Czar Alexander II led to an eventual cancellation of all restrictive measures imposed by the government and a complete equalization of the rights of Jews with those of other subjects of the Empire. If his successors had followed this policy, the « Jewish Question » would never have existed in Russia, at least not in such an acute form. Unfortunately, with the accession to the throne of Emperor Alexander III, the restrictive measures towards the Jews were increased. This attitude of the government encouraged some anti-semitic elements to violence. In April, 1903, a pogrom broke out in Kishinev. Forty-five Jews were killed and about four hundred wounded before order was restored. In August of the same year, another pogrom took place in Gomel, in the province of Mogilev. These pogroms could not possibly have occurred at the time of the reign of Czar Nicholas I and his son, Czar Alexander II.

If the plight of the Jews was bad, that of the peasants was almost worse. The strengthening of the peasant com-

munes had disastrous results on their welfare. The initiative of the strong peasants was completely suppressed. Having been kept in bondage of their communes, good and ambitious workmen in a village could not work properly on their land. It did not pay for them to work harder than the drunkards and the lazy ones did.

During the last three decades, peasants' lands were yielding surprisingly poor harvests. The quality of the soil deteriorated rapidly, and the majority of the peasants were able to sustain themselves only by working for neighboring landowners who always needed some extra work. They paid for this work, and with this money the peasants were able to buy much needed grain.

The noble landowners, on less than one-third of the fertile lands, produced enough grain to feed literally all Russian towns and cities, and to feed Western Europe as well, while Russian peasants, on more than two-thirds of the total arable lands could not produce enough grain to feed themselves!

The increasing discontent of the masses resulted in some open revolts. Actual peasant uprisings took place in 1902 in the provinces of Poltava and Kharkov. Some army units had to be called to suppress these revolts.

This growing discontent of the masses encouraged revolutionaries to start a war of terror again, which was discontinued with the assassination of the Czar-Emancipator in 1881. However, the Nihilists did not exist any more. Marxism was providing a new force, and terrorists were now members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

The first victims of the new terror were Bogolepov, Secretary of Education, who was killed in February, 1901, and Dmitri Sipyagin, Secretary of the Interior, killed in April, 1902. Bombing and assassinations of government officials were increasing rapidly, dissent was mounting among the students of Moscow and other universities, as well as among Russian intelligentsia. In July, 1904, Vyacheslav Plehve, Secretary of the Interior, was killed by a bomb while driving in a carriage through the streets of St. Petersburg.

In 1901, Japanese Marquis Ito arrived in St. Petersburg, trying to reach an agreement with Russia. By that time, Russia was already building a railroad across Manchuria,

connecting Port Arthur with the Trans-Siberian Railway, and Japan was considerably alarmed by the rapid Russian advance.

At that time, Japan was willing to be satisfied with very little, namely, Russia was to confirm that Korea was to be in the sphere of Japanese influence. On the other hand, Japan was to recognize the Russian seizure of Port Arthur, and was ready to acquiesce to the construction of a railroad to Port Arthur, but only a regular force to guard the railroad. Russia was also to maintain an open-door policy in Manchuria.

Marquis received a cold reception in St. Petersburg. He was anxious to reach an agreement with Russia because at that time the Japanese Ambassador to the Court of St. James was negotiating a treaty with Great Britain. In spite of all efforts, Marquis Ito left St. Petersburg without reaching any agreement with Russia. In the meantime, a treaty of alliance between Japan and Great Britain was signed in London. From that time on, the war party in Japan received a predominant influence, and war with Russia became inevitable.

In his memoirs, Count Witte, Russian Secretary of Finance and Prime Minister, made Russia alone responsible for bringing about this war. However, there are very good reasons to believe that Count Witte was wrong. At the last moment, Czar Nicholas II was willing to accede to practically all Japanese demands which by that time were already far from reasonable, but it was too late. The opportunity to avoid war by reaching an agreement with Marquis Ito was lost, and Russia was forced to face a struggle in the Far East.

Predecessors of Czar Nicholas II were much more cautious in their aggressive advances in Asia. Czar Alexander II would not have missed a chance to avoid war and to secure successful gains. His grandson, Czar Nicholas II, advanced boldly in the Far East. It appeared that he did not realize that by his bold actions he jeopardized not only gains made in the Far East since he ascended the throne, but was risking Russia's prestige and position among the great European powers.

In the Czar's Far-Eastern policy, the leading role was given to Bezobrazov, an irresponsible adventurer, whom the

Czar chose to trust more than his own ministers. Bezobrazov, a retired major of the Chevaliergarde Regiment, had a scheme of establishing timber concessions on the Yalu River. On the part of Russia, it was a breach of the existing treaties and of Russia's promise to Japan to leave Korea in the sphere of Japanese influence.

To the amazement of some members of the Cabinet, Bezobrazov was appointed State Secretary to His Majesty. A State Secretary in Russia was a rank in the civil government service. It did not correspond by any means to the position of Secretary of State in the United States. Bezobrazov was supported by Plehve, Secretary of the Interior. Both these men supported Admiral Alexeyev, a protégé of the Grand Duke Alexis, at that time Admiral-General. Admiral Alexeyev had no military or political experience and yet a new post of the « Viceroy of the Far East » was created for him.

It was a small group of irresponsible adventurers who influenced the Czar at that time in the questions of his Far East policies. It appeared that they did not realize that Russia was not prepared for war, and that it was folly to get Russia into war some four thousand miles away from European Russia, with only one single track of the Trans-Siberian Railway connecting the fighting front with its base. From the outset this war was destined to end in disaster.

## REVOLUTION OF 1905

### CHAPTER XIX

Vyacheslav Plehve, Secretary of the Interior, adopted underhand methods in his attempt to control the growing revolutionary movement among the working masses. He had his own agents provocateurs who pretended to defend the interests of the workmen, and were trying to organize them according to the instructions they received from the Police Department.

A police agent who became well known in this field was a man by the name of Vladimir Zubatov. In order to discourage workmen who were trying to improve their conditions by strikes and other more or less aggressive methods, the strikes were arranged on orders of the police and brought the workmen nothing but trouble.

After the assassination of Plehve in July, 1904, another agent provocateur appeared among the workmen in St. Petersburg. This agent was a Russian priest by the name of Father Gapon. With the knowledge and approval of the authorities, Father Gapon decided to lead workmen to the Winter Palace to present their grievances to the Czar. This march was scheduled to take place on Sunday, according to the Russian calendar on the 9th, according to the European calendar, on the 22nd day of January, 1905.

On the eventful day, a multitude of workmen, carrying a portrait of the Czar and religious icons, with Father Gapon at their head, approached the Winter Palace. The military commander of the troops stationed in front of the palace ordered the crowd to disperse. The workmen believed in

promises made to them by Father Gapon that the Czar was ready to listen to them and, therefore, were reluctant to leave. They did not know that a few days previously the Czar had left St. Petersburg.

Was this provocation arranged purposely by the distorted mind of some government official, or at the last minute, facing a multitude of workmen, did those in charge lose their courage? Anyway, an order was given to shoot, and several hundred workmen were killed and wounded on that day in the Palace Square.

How was that event reported to the Czar? It was doubtful that the Czar actually was informed about all the details and especially about the brutal role of the Police department and of the Russian priest.

Three days previously, on the 6-19 of January, 1905, at the time of a religious ceremony which took place on the ice on the Neva River, in front of the Winter Palace, guns placed at St. Peter and Paul Fortress fired a salute. And, suddenly, shrapnel hit the ice near the place where the Czar was standing and broke some windows of the palace. The Czar remained calm; there was not the twitch of a muscle on his face, and the ceremony proceeded as scheduled.

Later on it was reported to the Czar that a real shell was used in one of the guns, which was the result of negligence on the part of some artillery officers. On orders of the Czar, these officers escaped punishment. They were only transferred to some other units of the army. In this, Czar Nicholas II was generous and forgiving.

On the 17th of February, 1905, the Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovitch, the Czar's uncle and Governor-General of Moscow, was killed by a bomb. The body of the Grand Duke was blown to small pieces. The assassin, a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, did not attempt to escape. The Grand Duchess Elisabeth, widow of the late Grand Duke, spoke to him and offered to make an appeal for his life. The man refused.

After the assassination of her husband, the Grand Duchess retired to a convent and became a nun. She was murdered by the Soviet Government together with some other members of the Imperial Family in Alapayevsk, in the



Province of Perm, in 1918. The Grand Duchess was even more beautiful than her younger sister, the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna.

Czar Nicholas II adored his wife. Their marriage was a very happy one in all respects but one. The young couple's natural desire was to have a son, especially as it was important to have an Heir-Apparent to the throne of Russia.

Year after year one girl after another was born... four girls in succession! Medical science could not offer any remedy, hence the Imperial couple turned to religion and to mysticism. At that time, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch, the future Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the First World War, was interested in spiritualism. In his palace near Strelna, besides the usual parties, spiritualistic séances were arranged. The Grand Duke instructed Count Muravyev-Amoursky, Russian Military Attaché in Paris, to invite to Russia a certain doctor de Chose (nom de plume) who was an authority on Jewish Kabbalah and had written a book on the subject. Count Muravyev-Amoursky happened to belong to a group of admirers of a certain charlatan and a quack doctor by the name of Philippe de Lyon. Admirers of this Philippe believed him to be a saint who was not born but came down from heaven. According to official records, this Philippe was tried several times by the police court for fraud.

Following the request of the Grand Duke, instead of bringing to St. Petersburg Doctor de Chose, who refused to come, Count Muravyev-Amoursky brought Philippe de Lyon to Russia. The Grand Duke and his younger brother Peter Nicholayevitch and the two Montenegro sisters, Anastasia and Militza, were very much impressed by Philippe Vachot (Vachot was his family name) and managed to introduce him to the Empress. From that time on, Philippe Vachot often came to Russia and lived secretly near the summer residence of the Czar.

He arranged séances and talked to the Empress and had an enormous influence on her, practically hypnotizing her. Under his influence, the Empress imagined that she was expecting a child. Evidently on his advice, she refused to submit to doctors' examinations, but all the symptoms of

her pregnancy were there. All court festivities were officially suspended, but when the time came, no child was born. Philippe Vachot was advised to leave Russia.

After his departure, his admirers, including Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch, believed that he accomplished his mission on earth and ascended to heaven alive!

At the court of the unfortunate King Louis XVI of France and Marie Antoniette, at one time a charlatan known under the name of Count Balsamo Cagliostro played an important role. In a curiously similar way, Philippe Vachot was also the harbinger of tragic events that followed.

After the unfortunate experience with « Doctor Philippe de Lyon », the Imperial couple turned to the Mother Church.

Count Witte, in his memoirs, told a story of how a hermit by the name Seraphim was canonized. This story was told to Witte by Constantin Pobedonostsev, Procurator of the Holy Synod. According to Witte, Pobedonostsev received an order from the Czar to canonize Seraphim, and Pobedonostsev obligingly executed the order. Of course, all necessary formalities were properly followed by the highest authorities of the Russian Church.

The Czar and the Czarina went for the opening of the new Saint's relics at the Sarovsky hermitage. The Empress prayed, and her prayers were finally answered. On the 30th of July, 1904, a son was born to her, Cesarevitch Alexis Nicholayevitch.

In the meantime, reports from the fighting fronts were far from reassuring. The Russo-Japanese War started on the 9th of February, 1904, with a Japanese sneak attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur. In the first two months of war, Admiral Togo succeeded in sinking the flagship « Petropavlovsk » of Admiral Makaroff, Commander of the Russian Asiatic fleet. Admiral Makaroff perished with his ship, and the Japanese gained an indisputable control of the sea.

With the beginning of war, General Kuropatkin, Secretary of War, and former Chief of Staff of General Skobelev, a hero of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in Manchuria. He took some time to depart for the fighting

front, bidding goodbye to different government departments, garrisons and army units, and everywhere he was blessed with an icon. Even on his long journey to Manchuria, different delegations were awaiting him at the railroad stations in order to bless him, and each one presented him with an icon. By the time the brave general arrived at the fighting front, he had quite a collection of icons, but the Russian Army continued to retreat.

Kuropatkin intended to retreat until the army units arriving from European Russia would give the Russians superiority over the enemy. However, Admiral Alexeyev, the Viceroy of the Far East, interfered continuously, and Kuropatkin was not strong enough to stand his ground.

On the 1st of January, 1905, Port Arthur capitulated to the Japanese. In February-March of the same year, at the battle of Mukden, which lasted more than ten days, the Russians suffered their greatest defeat. By this time the irresponsible advisers of the Czar realized that Russia was not destined to « dictate conditions of a victorious peace in Tokyo » as they were predicting, and began to scatter.

The idea of sending the Russian Baltic fleet to the Far East proved to be disastrous. After the fall of Port Arthur, Admiral Rozhdestvensky decided to get to the naval base at Vladivostok. He reached the Tsushima Straits by the end of May, when a battle with Admiral Togo took place. In this battle, with the exception of a few small ships, the entire Russian Baltic fleet was lost, and Admiral Rozhdestvensky was captured by the Japanese.

Due to the news from the fighting front, disappointment and bitterness increased among the Russian intelligentsia. They refused to believe in a possible Russian recovery, and were looking for revenge. They started an open struggle against the Czar.

Strikes, bombings, assassinations of government officials were increasing daily. Practically in all Russian towns and cities socialist demonstrations with red flags took place. The *Marsaillaise*, a song of revolution, became a very popular song in Russia! Very often these demonstrations ended by a general pogrom when stores were looted by the mobs in the

streets. The local police were helpless to prevent these disorders.

Throughout the country, peasants were pillaging and setting fires to the country homes of the gentry. They were destroying everything — libraries, valuable furniture, oil paintings — they were killing cattle and horses, and were burning down the barns and granaries of unfortunate landowners.

As a matter of fact, it was not hatred that prompted Russian peasants to act that way towards their former noble lords. In their own way, the peasants were fighting for more land. They knew that the landowners, as a rule, did not carry any insurance, or their insurance was not sufficient to permit them to recover. After the loss of all their buildings and implements, many of them were forced to sell or to give up their land. And the peasants had exactly this aim in mind.

A general railroad strike was proclaimed and for two weeks Russia appeared to be ruled by Khrustalev-Nosar, president of the council (soviet) of the workers. It seemed that the government was losing control.

At this critical moment, on the 5th of September, 1905, Count Witte signed a peace treaty with Japan at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In spite of defeat, the conditions of this treaty were not too harsh. Russia was to leave Lioatung Peninsula as well as Southern Manchuria and Korea. All these territories were to be in the Japanese sphere of influence. Russia agreed to surrender to Japan the southern half of Sakhalin Island. Komura, representing Japan in Portsmouth, with the approval of the Emperor of Japan, waived the question of indemnity.

It was the end of the Russian Far Eastern adventure. On top of all material losses and thousands of men killed, Russia « lost face » in Asia. In addition, Russia was enveloped in the flames of revolution.

On the 17-30 of October, 1905, a manifesto of the Czar granting Russia a representative form of government was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm and turned the tide against the revolutionaries. Although the majority of intellectuals were perfectly willing to cooperate with the government on the basis of this new constitution, the revolutionary leaders, socialists and communists continued to remain

hostile to the existing order. The socialists believed that socialism, and communism as its final phase, could be immediately introduced in Russia. They desired the abolition of landed property. During the fall of 1905, in nineteen provinces of European Russia, approximately two thousand landed estates were pillaged and destroyed.

On the 3-16 of December, 1905, the council (soviet) of workers in St. Petersburg, with all its members, was arrested. Its followers replied by an armed uprising in Moscow. In many other cities and communities armed insurrections broke out. In many places along the Trans-Siberian Railway revolutionary upheavals took place.

Count Witte was destined to be the first president of the unified cabinet. The government was facing two important and very urgent problems. First, on account of the recent war with Japan, the financial position of the government was rather weak. The government needed a loan and feared that the new Parliament would not sanction it. Second, the Russian Army was still in the Far East. Owing to the railroad strikes and disorders, the government was unable to transport the troops through Siberia back to European Russia and could not order a demobilization.

In a very short time, Count Witte solved these problems. He succeeded in receiving a large loan from France. The archives of the Russian Imperial government made public by the Bolsheviks revealed the fact that Count Witte had paid large sums to the French press in order to make this loan possible.

At the same time, Count Witte sent expeditionary forces to restore order on the Trans-Siberian Railway. The government was compelled to act ruthlessly in this matter, and finally Count Witte succeeded in bringing back the army from the Far East.

General Dubassov was appointed Governor-General of Moscow. He was entrusted with the task of restoring order in this ancient capital, where revolutionaries had constructed barricades and were fighting soldiers on the streets.

In different parts of the empire martial law was proclaimed. A governor was appointed for Yalta and nearby

districts. This governor was the famous General Ivan Antonovitch Dumbadze, a Georgian. He was extremely loyal to the throne. The socialist-terrorists were hiding in the mountains around Yalta, having at their disposal ammunition and bombs. General Dumbadze ruthlessly raided these socialist strongholds and paraded with his troops through the streets of Yalta.

General Dumbadze stated that he was responsible for the order and safety of the members of the Imperial family who were living on their estates in Crimea and, therefore, mercilessly deported all suspicious persons. A reporter, Pervukhin, severely criticized General Dumbadze's actions, in the columns of a local newspaper. Instead of deporting Pervukhin, General Dumbadze challenged him to a duel. Dumbadze told my father that he would get rid of Pervukhin without order of deportation... Pervukhin left Yalta in a hurry.

The lists of the deported individuals were published daily in the local newspaper. Some of them appealed to General Dumbadze personally. Dumbadze was very abrupt, and without going into details, usually asked the petitioners to give him their word of honor that they would in the future refrain from socialist activities. Whoever kept his promise was left undisturbed.

Dumbadze was strict in the executions of his orders. At the same time, he was fair and kindhearted. His integrity was never questioned.

How well I remember the sound of a terrific explosion. It was a bomb that was thrown at General Dumbadze on Nicholayevskaya Street, when he was driving in his carriage to Livadia. The bomb was thrown by a terrorist from a balcony of the villa of a Mr. Novikov. By the force of the explosion, General Dumbadze was thrown out of his carriage, but was not seriously injured. His escort of four soldiers who were riding behind his carriage jumped into the house, but it was too late. The terrorist, after throwing the bomb, shot himself in the mouth.

Soldiers of the infantry regiment stationed in Livadia adored General Dumbadze. When they heard the explosion, they rushed to the place of the incident. The villa was

surrounded and burned down. General Dumbadze had previously announced that he would destroy any building from which a shot would be fired or a bomb thrown at any government official. He made landlords and superintendents responsible for the people whom they admitted to their premises. Now he kept his word, and even the stone foundation of the villa was destroyed.

Later on, the government paid Mr. Novikov seventy-five thousand Roubles (\$ 37,500) for his villa. This was more than he could have gotten by selling his property.

General Dumbadze's eardrums were injured by the detonation, and about a year later he took leave for a few months to consult ear specialists in St. Petersburg and Germany. During his absence, Novitzki, Governor of Crimea, gave permission to a number of persons who had been deported to return to Yalta. At that time it was rumored that Novitzki's honesty could be disputed.

As soon as General Dumbadze came back for duty after his leave, he demanded the Governor to give an explanation for his actions.

«I deport, and you return, the same people!» he exclaimed. In the course of the ensuing quarrel, General Dumbadze ordered the deportation from Yalta of Governor Novitzki himself, although he was his superior. Novitzki left Yalta, but appealed to St. Petersburg. Dumbadze was delighted, because he expected to be dismissed from his troublesome post.

«I am only a soldier», he used to say.

However, members of the Imperial Family did not feel safe without Dumbadze, and he was ordered to remain at his post.

Gradually, normal conditions were restored throughout the Empire. Russia then entered a new era of economic and industrial activities and began to develop rapidly. New railroad were built, new factories were opened, new oil wells were drilled, and all kinds of minerals were mined. Russia's trade expanded rapidly every year, and prices on the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange were continuously rising, reflecting an unprecedented general economic, industrial and financial growth of the country

Of course, I was merely a boy at that time and these events did not affect my life much. I listened to the continuous discussions of my elders with great interest, being able to form my own opinion only years later.



## PRINCE OUCHA DADIANI

### CHAPTER XX

As soon as order was restored in Russia, the Czar resumed regular visits to his Crimean estate, Livadia. Every year he spent two or three months there in spring or autumn.

Long before his arrival the little town would be filled with all kinds of government officials, courtiers and members of St. Petersburg society. The exact date of his arrival was never announced. His Majesty's yacht, «Standard», was traveling from St. Petersburg all around Europe, through the Mediterranean, to the Black Sea, where the Russian naval base at Sebastopol had a natural harbor of such tremendous size that the whole Russian Black Sea fleet was able to anchor there. The railroad from St. Petersburg to Crimea terminated at Sebastopol, and from Sebastopol to Yalta, the scenic shore drive through the mountain was famous for its beauty.

The Czar traversed Russia on the Imperial train running in three sections, and boarded his yacht at Sebastopol. A few days before his arrival, some battleships, cruisers and destroyers were usually dispatched to Yalta and anchored in the open sea two or three miles from shore. When the «Standard», a most graceful yacht, slowly approached the pier at Yalta, the battleships and cruisers fired the Imperial salute of one hundred and one guns. This salute reverberated in the mountains which surrounded Yalta in the north.

At the shore, the Czar was greeted by the solemn strains of the national anthem, «God Save the Czar», and by the continuous hurrahs of the crowds.

Though the Czar had several motor cars at his disposal, he always drove from the pier to his estate in an open carriage, driven by two horses. Preceding the carriage galloped an old Tatar guide, seated on a prancing Crimean pony, and dressed in his national Tatar costume, all embroidered in gold. The carriage of the Heir-Apparent, Cesarevitch Alexis, followed, then the carriage of the four daughters of the Czar. These three carriages were followed by innumerable carriages of the Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses and the members of the Imperial Suite.

The crowd appeared to forget the recent revolutionary outbreak and greeted their Sovereign with tremendous enthusiasm that was restrained with difficulty by the police and by the soldiers placed along the road.

After the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, his son, Czar Alexander III appeared rarely on the streets of St. Petersburg. The last Czar, Nicholas II, never appeared on the streets of the capital, yet he often appeared on the streets of Yalta. He was usually accompanied by a few cossacks of His Majesty's Escort in their colorful uniforms. At times the carriage was driven slowly, and all the passers-by could see the Czar very clearly. He saluted the crowd in a military fashion, smiling in his usual gracious manner. His resemblance to his cousin, King George V was striking, yet his eyes were much kinder than those of the British Monarch.

The Czar had a well-tanned complexion, and there were deep rings under his eyes. He had a habit of stroking his moustache in a rather nervous gesture, although he never lost his kingly poise, even after his abdication, when he was kept prisoner in Czarskoye Selo, and later on, in Tobolsk, in Siberia.

The Empress Alexandra Fedorovna was always rather stiff and proud in her demeanor. She was a handsome woman, but her beauty was marred by red spots which appeared on her face. She had a nervous disposition. The Czarina, before her marriage, was Princess Alix of Hesse. There were four Princesses of the House of Hesse, who married members of the Romanov family. Countess (Landgräfin) Wilhelmina of Hesse was the wife of Czar Paul I (1796-1801). Princess Marie of Hesse was the wife of Czar Alexander II (1855-1881). Princess



*Czar Nicholas II.*





*Czar Nicholas II and his cousin King George V with their sons — Edward Prince of Wales (now the Duke of Windsor) and Cesarevich Alexis.*



Elisabeth of Hesse was the wife of Grand Duke Serge, uncle of the last Czar, and her younger sister, Princess Alix of Hesse, was the wife of the last Czar, Nicholas II. All four of these Romanovs died violent deaths.

The little boy, Cesarevitch Alexis, accepted the greetings of the crowd rather seriously, and punctiliously saluted back in a military way. He was usually accompanied by a sailor, Derevenko, who played the part of his nurse. I remember the Cesarevitch once lost his composure, and standing on the back seat of the carriage he screamed at the top of his voice: «Hurry up, Derevenko!» The crowd roared with laughter, looking at the sailor who was trotting on his pony behind the carriage.

I remember Grand Duke Dmitri, brother of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, who was surrounded by a crowd in front of the Hotel de Russie in Yalta. The Grand Duke stood smiling in his carriage, asking the crowd to make way for him. The sight of the young, handsome man in the uniform of the Imperial Horse Guards aroused the enthusiasm of the crowd. The loud hurrahs acclaimed the young prince.

Many members of the Imperial family had their estates in Crimea and lived on the shore of the Black Sea during several months every year. The native Tatars were extremely loyal to the Imperial family and to the Russian aristocrats who had their estates and villas there. These Tatars did not take part in the revolution of 1905. When the stores in Yalta were looted during the disorders that followed the Russo-Japanese War, it was done by a street mob of Russians who had come to Crimea looking for work. Being Moslems, the Tatars had their own traditions, respecting their elders. Unbounded hospitality has always been an essential part of the religious code of an Oriental. He considered every guest as sent to him by Allah, and Russian owners of Crimean estates were regarded as guests in Crimea.

As a matter of fact, the Caucasians and the Tatars were much more loyal to the throne and to their direct superiors than Russians. These Oriental subjects of the Russian empire were most interesting characters.

I remember His Serene Highness Prince Oucha Dadiani of the former reigning family of Mingrelia, who served in

His Majesty's Escort. The Czar liked this Georgian Prince very much, and Oucha, in turn, adored his Sovereign. Out of deep affection for Oucha, the Czar singled him out by addressing him « thou », a very intimate way. Czar Nicholas II addressed only very few of his most intimate friends that way.

Prince Dadiani usually accompanied the Czar on his journeys in Crimea. More often than any other officer of His Majesty's Escort he took charge of the guards placed inside the Imperial Palace in Czarskoye Selo and in Livadia. The Czar usually stayed in his office late at night, sometimes until the early hours of the morning. But he got up every day without exception at six o'clock; therefore, quite often he had only a couple of hours of sleep. This explained the dark rings under his eyes.

The Czar had to read volumes of official papers and reports delivered to him daily from different government offices. Once in a while he felt tired and wanted to rest. If Dadiani was on duty, the Czar called him to his office. He liked to play chess with Dadiani, and listened to his stories about his native Caucasus, its traditions and customs. Although the Czar talked to Dadiani often in this informal way, he never discussed affairs of state with him.

Dadiani had a considerable fortune, but he was a gambler. Sometimes the Czar paid his card debts, trying at the same time to persuade him to give up gambling.

Once, when the Czar was returning to Livadia late in the evening, Prince Dadiani, as usual, accompanied him, riding behind the carriage of the Czar. It was dark, and raining. Dadiani lost his cap. His cossacks looked for it in the darkness but could not find it. The Czar was amused, and Dadiani felt embarrassed.

The next morning, at nine o'clock, the Czar went from Livadia to visit Count Fredericks, the old Minister of the Court, who was lying sick in bed in the Hotel Marino in Yalta. The sun was shining, the fresh breeze was blowing from the sea, but on the road there were puddles of water from the previous night's rain. Dadiani again rode behind the carriage of the Czar. Early that morning his cossacks had found his cap hanging on a branch of a tree, and Dadiani's pride





Его Императорское Высочество  
Наслѣдникъ Цесаревичъ и Великій Князь  
**АЛЕКСѢЙ НИКОЛАЕВИЧЪ**  
Шефъ Морского Корпуса съ 1914 года.

*The son of the last Czar,  
Cesarevitch Alexis.*





*Prince Oucha Dadiani in the uniform  
of an officer of His Majesty's Escort.*



of an efficient officer had been reinstated. When the Imperial cortege entered Yalta, a gust of wind tore off the navy cap of the Czar and it rolled along the street.

«It will fall in a puddle, I am afraid», the Czar remarked, and so it did. Now, it was the turn of Dadiani to be amused. Of course, he did not dare laugh. A baker ran out of his store, rescued the cap from the water and approached the carriage, proudly presenting it to the Czar.

The Czar never carried money. He usually received a gold coin every Sunday from his private purse to put on a plate in church. It actually was the only allowance that he received in cash. And now the Czar had no money to tip the baker.

«Dadiani, give me a Rouble», the Czar asked. Dadiani had played cards the night before, and had lost his last penny. He turned to his sergeant, asking him for a Rouble. The sergeant had to dig the money out of his boot; it was wrapped in a piece of paper. The Czar watched this slow procedure — how the sergeant finally got hold of the money and gave one Rouble to Dadiani, and Dadiani in turn presented it to the Czar. The Czar took his cap from the baker, thanked the man and gave him the money. Then he turned to Dadiani.

«Aren't you ashamed, Dadiani? You haven't a penny with you!» the Czar said. Dadiani lost no time in replying,

«Your Majesty, if my Emperor has no money, how can it be expected from a poor Prince Dadiani to have any?»

The Czar laughed, and the Imperial cortege proceeded without any further incidents to the Hotel Marino. The same day, the Czar ordered the sum of fifteen thousand Roubles to be given to Prince Dadiani.

In the First World War, with his native Caucasian squadron, Dadiani crossed the Dniester River under heavy fire from the Austrian artillery. His courageous deed marked the beginning of the advance of the Russian armies into Galicia. Prince Dadiani received the highest Russian decoration for bravery, the Cross of St. George, and his name was mentioned in the communiqué of the GHQ.

I also remember a great friend of my father, the old

Sultan Akhmeth Girei, Prince Genghis. Prince Genghis was a direct descendant of Genghis-Khan, the great conqueror, who invaded Europe in the beginning of the XIII century. Prince Genghis was brought up in the Corps des Pages in St. Petersburg and served in the Cossack Regiment of the Guards. He spoke French fluently and wore a lorgnette as was the fashion of the past century. He was of Moslem faith, was always dressed in a black Tatar national costume. Although as a Mohammedan he was allowed by the Koran to have several wives, he had only one.

Princess Genghis was a small Tatar woman. Her wrinkled face bore traces of former beauty. In spite of her age, her hair had remained jet black.

The villa of Prince Genghis in Yalta was built in Moorish style. Inside, the furniture was European, with Persian rugs hanging on the walls covering the low oriental divans. A Tatar servant greeted guests at the door with a deep «selam», bowing and touching his forehead and his heart with his right hand. All servants of Prince Genghis were Tatars. They were known in Russia as the best and most loyal servants.

Prince Genghis liked to play pocket billiards with my father, and they were close friends.

One day my parents received an invitation for lunch from Prince and Princess Genghis. The lunch was arranged in honor of His Highness Said-Mir-Alim-Khan, Emir of Bokhara. In Central Asia, there were three Khanates: Kokand, Bokhara, and Khiva, under the protectorate of the Russian Empire. In 1876, Kokand was completely absorbed by Russia and renamed «Ferghana Territory», but the two Emirates of Bokhara and Khiva preserved their semi-independence on the condition that in their territory slavery was abolished and their markets remained open to Russian traders. Bokhara was known for its caracul, oriental Bokhara rugs, and silk, somewhat similar to Chinese tussah. In Bokhara, silk cloths were made of especially bright colors and the combinations of colors were quite daring. Oriental robes for men (khalates) were made of this silk and were worn on the streets.

The Emir of Bokhara, with his suite, used to come to Yalta at the time when the Czar was living in Livadia. All

members of the suite of Emir consisted of men only. If there were some women, these women were well hidden because I never saw any. All men were dressed in long oriental robes (khalates) of very bright colors, with white turbans on their heads.

With the consent of Prince and Princess Genghis, my parents took me with them, although I was only about ten or twelve years old. We arrived at the villa and a Tatar servant greeted my parents with a deep selam. We were conducted to the livingroom where some guests were already assembled. I watched my father greet Prince Genghis first. Then, he crossed the room, approached Princess Genghis, bowed and kissed her hand. The old Tatar woman blushed with pleasure and smiled at my father. I learned that my father was right — in a house of a Mohammedan the host was more important than the hostess and had to be greeted first.

There was Princess Tarkhan-Moouravoff, sitting on a low sofa. The Princess had an estate « Kuchuk-Lombat » on the seashore, between Soouk-Sou and Ayu-Dag Mountain. My parents used to visit her quite often. There were two brothers, Princes Eristoff, a young Princess Dadiani, and Abdurakhmanchikoff with his wife. The last one was a member of an old noble family of Crimean Tatars which was related to the old Khans of Crimea. He also was related to Princess Genghis.

In a few minutes the Emir of Bokhara arrived, accompanied by only one man of his suite. The Emir was about six feet tall, and rather fat. He had a flat face of a Mongol, with a long, dark beard, and wore the same oriental robe (khalat) made of silk, only his khalat was black, and his turban was unusually large.

While Prince Genghis was introducing his guests to the Emir, General Dumbadze entered the room. He was followed by Michael Mikhailovitch Gvozdevitch, Police Commissioner of Yalta. Gvozdevitch rose from the ranks and became so important that once in a while he was invited to the luncheons given to the high government officials in Livadia. He was elevated to the status of hereditary nobility and had a villa in Yalta.

After the necessary greetings and introductions were over, we all proceeded to the diningroom. As the only child present, I was placed at the end of the table, on the left of Prince Genghis. The Tatar servants started to serve noiselessly and with great skill. The lunch was very simple. It consisted of some soup served in cups, and ragout of lamb with rice and green salad. No wine was served because all alcoholic beverages made of grapes were strictly forbidden by the Koran.

When the ragout of lamb was served, I noted that a special dish in a covered silver pan was served to Prince Genghis. The Prince noticed my curious glance.

« Would you like to try it? » he asked me with a smile.  
« It is young colt's meat and it is delicious ».

I hastened to thank the Prince and refused. I did not know at that time that I was destined to be compelled to eat horse meat a year after the revolution, and of some old horse at that, as it was the only meat available in St. Petersburg in 1918.

After lunch, we all moved to the livingroom, where Turkish coffee was served in small cups, and some Turkish delight, « rakhat-loukum », « halva », and chocolate bonbons.

About half an hour later, the Emir rose from his chair. He thanked his host and hostess, bidding goodbye to all the guests. Prince Genghis accompanied him to the door, and we all walked out on the small porch of the house. The carriage of Prince Genghis, with two prancing horses, was brought for the Emir to the entrance.

« What beautiful horses you have, Prince! » the Emir complimented his host.

« They are yours, Your Highness! » the Prince replied at once, following an oriental custom to present his guest with everything the guest admired.

The Emir of Bokhara thanked the Prince and sat in the carriage. From that moment on the carriage and the horses became his property and the Tatar coachman of Prince Genghis at that time became his servant.

A few days later, the Emir presented Genghis with a dozen oriental robes made of the finest Bokhara silk. In the Orient this exchange of gifts was called « Pesh-kesh ».



## RASPUTIN

### CHAPTER XXI

About six months after the birth of Cesarevitch Alexis, the Czar and Czarina received an unexpected shock. Their only son and the heir to the throne. Cesarevitch Alexis, was found to be afflicted with haemophilia, commonly known as the « bleeder's disease ». This disease had been known since Biblical times, occurring in certain male members of afflicted families, transmission taking place through female members of the same families, but the women themselves remaining immune to it.

Due to the traditions which forbade discussions of the Imperial family's health very few were aware of the affliction of the Cesarevitch. Eventually, the public learned the condition of his health, and blamed the Empress and the House of Hesse for transmitting this disease to the heir of the Russian throne.

As a matter of fact, the House of Hesse was not to be blamed. The source of this affliction was to be found in the British Royal family, namely, the old Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, her consort.

Fortunately for Great Britain, their oldest son, King Edward VII, was free from this misfortune, but his brothers, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duke of Connaught, suffered from it, and the youngest brother, the Duke of Albany, died from it. The old Queen Victoria had five daughters who transmitted this disease to some other royal houses of Europe. Her oldest daughter, Princess Victoria was the mother of Emperor Wilhelm of Germany, who could not use

his left arm very well, although this defect could not have been attributed to haemophilia but to the fact that he had been crippled at birth. The second daughter of the Queen, Princess Alice, was the mother of the Russian Empress. Her third daughter, Princess Helene, was married to Prince of Schleswig-Holstein. The fourth daughter, Princess Louise, was married to Marquess of Lorne, the oldest son of the Duke of Argyll — they had no children — and, finally, the youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, was married to the Duke of Battenberg, and her daughter was the wife of King Alfonso XIII of Spain, whose oldest son died from haemophilia.

How terrible was it for any mother to realize that she had transmitted an incurable disease to her child, and especially if the disease could be fatal! A small, insignificant cut could be followed by uncontrollable bleeding. A haemophiliac was constantly vulnerable and at any moment his life could be in danger.

Cesarevitch Alexis was a very lively child, but an afflicted child romping about and falling on his elbows or knees could develop bleeding in the joints, which could eventually lead to deformities. One could imagine the poor Empress Alexandra watching her little boy, constantly being afraid of an accident that could be fatal to him. And court etiquette did not permit the Empress to be a nurse to her son. She had to appear happy and content, graciously smiling to everybody, while her only son was lying in his little bed, suffering from internal hemorrhages.

All the doctors pronounced this disease incurable and the Empress turned to religion as her only hope.

Empress Alexandra was reared in England, with its rigid and cold, well-regulated life. Therefore, she was much impressed by the deep mysticism of her new country, so much, as a matter of fact, that she accepted it and embraced it with her whole being and became even more addicted to it than the average native Russian. She expected miracles as something perfectly natural, and when she was told that a certain « holy » man by the name of Gregory Rasputin was able to cure her son, she was willing to believe it. Gregory Rasputin was a native of Siberia. He was brought to St. Petersburg by the Russian Archbishop of Korea, and his



*Gregory Rasputin.*



first appearance in the Russian capital was possibly in the kitchen of Countess Ignatiev, a well-known hostess of St. Petersburg.

The late husband of Countess Ignatiev was appointed Procurator of the Holy Synod, but died suddenly before he had time to take over this post. His widow decided to take over the administration of the affairs of the Russian Church, and the reception rooms of her mansion in St. Petersburg were usually crowded with archbishops, priests, monks and other representatives of the Russian clergy, including some Metropolitans (a rank of a Metropolitan of the Eastern Church corresponded to the rank of a Cardinal in the Roman-Catholic Church). They drank tea endlessly in the spacious dining room, telling the good Countess all their troubles and their aspirations to get a certain post or a certain parish.

From the rear entrance of the house the Countess received so-called « holy people », who sat in her servants' quarters and in her kitchen for hours, drinking tea and waiting to catch a glimpse of their benefactor.

A number of Russian peasants, men and women alike, were leaving their native villages and were wandering from one monastery to another. In one place, they worshipped at the holy relics of some saint, at another they were kneeling in front of some miracle working icon, and so on. These wanderings lasted sometimes many months, even years. Quite often these « holy people » made pilgrimages on foot to the Holy Land to worship at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Sometimes they were arrested in Russia by the police for vagrancy, but generally speaking, they were regarded as « holy people » by the majority of Russians, and everyone gave them some money, food, and even a place to stay overnight.

It was difficult to determine what exactly prompted all these people to go wandering from one place to another. Probably, many of them were just lazy, and left their native villages to escape hard labor in the fields. Some of these « wanderers » were possibly genuinely religious.

Rasputin wandered for many years, and went on foot to the Holy Land. He received instructions from Buddhist monks in Siberia, and acquired a hypnotic power. In spite

of being an illiterate mujik, Gregory Rasputin made a very strong impression on all whom he met.

The pale blue, almost colorless eyes of Rasputin made quite an impression on Countess Ignatiev, and she introduced him to Anastasia and Militza of Montenegro, who, in turn, introduced him to the Empress.

A number of Russian peasants, men and women alike, were known to have an ability to «cast a spell over the blood», i.e. to stop bleeding. They knew what plants, when applied to the tender tissue of the skin, could cause an immediate bleeding, they knew what plants could stop it. Some of them could make blood coagulate without even touching the wound («to cast a spell over the blood», in Russian, «zagovarivat krov»). Was it a hypnosis? Maybe. They stood so near to nature that they knew many things which well-educated people did not understand. Rasputin was not the only one who possessed this gift.

Rasputin was brought to the Empress for the specific purpose of helping the Cesarevitch who suffered horribly at that time from an internal hemorrhage. The boy was in bed, white as a ghost. Blood, accumulating in one place, was pressing and tearing tissues apart, causing terrible pain. Rasputin approached the bed of the Cesarevitch, knelt, and started to pray. Then he asked everybody, including the Empress, to leave the room.

When, half an hour later, Rasputin emerged from the bedroom, the Cesarevitch was asleep. He slept soundly that night, and the bleeding stopped. The Empress believed Rasputin was a saint!

A few months later, some railroad cars were derailed on the road leading from St. Petersburg to Czarskoye Selo, the residence of the Czar. Madame Anna Vyroubov, Lady-in-waiting of the Empress, happened to be on the train and her legs were injured. She was bleeding profusely... there was no doctor around, but Rasputin, who knew Madame Vyroubov by sight, came to help her. In a very short time, the bleeding stopped.

After this accident, Madame Vyroubov became crippled for life, but absolutely nothing could shake her faith in

Rasputin, who possibly at that time saved her life. Madame Vyroubov was close to the Empress, and her strong conviction influenced the Empress still more to believe that Rasputin possessed some supernatural powers

The Empress was anxious to have Rasputin near her little boy at all times. Rasputin was called to the Imperial Palace at any time of day or night, and his frequent visits and his presence in the palace had to be officially explained.

It was decided to make Rasputin a priest. But, unfortunately, he was illiterate! The task of teaching him to read and write was entrusted to « Yeromonach » (priest-monk) Iliodor.

Iliodor was a classmate of Joseph Stalin in a theological seminary. Stalin quit the school, being engaged in revolutionary activities. Iliodor was graduated and became a missionary. He was very successful, and his revival meetings attracted huge crowds, especially women. He was introduced to the Czar, a great reward for his achievements.

Iliodor became ambitious. His aspiration was to become the Father Confessor to the Czar. Instead, he was entrusted with the task of teaching an illiterate mujik to read and write, while he, the highly successful missionary, could not even hope to become a priest of the Imperial Chapel. Adding insult to injury, in the eyes of the Czar and Czarina, this illiterate mujik was a saint!

Iliodor began to hate his pupil. These two men became mortal enemies. Their mutual hatred lasted for many years and induced Iliodor, from the place of his exile, Bergen, Norway, in the summer of 1914, to send one of his admirers, a woman by the name of Guseva, to kill Rasputin.

At that time Rasputin was visiting his native village, « Selo Pokrovskoye » in Siberia. The woman met him in Tyumen, in the Ural Mountains, on his return trip to St. Petersburg. She approached Rasputin for his blessing and thrust a knife into his abdomen.

At the time of the assassination of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand in Sarajevo, Rasputin was lying in bed in a hospital in Tyumen, recovering from this wound. He was sending telegrams to the Czar, one after another, strongly

advising him to avoid war at any cost. Rasputin was a true representative of the Russian peasants. The Czar knew it and valued his opinion. The war was extremely unpopular among the masses of the Russian people; if Rasputin had been in St. Petersburg in the summer of 1914, possibly the war would have been avoided — who knows?

But, fate decided otherwise.

In december, 1916, Rasputin was killed by Prince Felix Youssouppoff, my classmate in the Corps des Pages.

But, coming back to our story, Rasputin turned out to be incapable of mastering Russian spelling; he never learned to read and write, and never became a priest.

In order to explain his presence in the Imperial Palace, he was given a rank of a « Lampado-vozhigatel ». His official duties were to light oil lamps in front of icons in the palace rooms. His nearness to the Imperial family was very damaging to the popularity of the Empress.

The Empress Alexandra was very much in love with the Czar. She ran like a young girl to greet him at the entrance of the palace when, during the First World War, the Czar used to return from the fighting front. There was no doubt that the Empress was a faithful and loving wife, and a good mother to her children. However, the behavior of Rasputin outside the Imperial palace was outrageous, and caused much gossip and criticism. All four daughters of the Czar hated Rasputin, but the Empress stubbornly believed in him. Her letters to him she signed: « I kiss your feet », believing him to be a Saint.

Rasputin was known to frequent well-known night clubs in St. Petersburg where everyone could see him, often drunk. In his drunken stupors, he used to call the Empress, disrespectfully, by her nickname « Sashka ». He acted like an ill-mannered drunk-mujik who wanted to brag about his position in the Imperial Palace. On some occasions, in his usual intoxicated state, Rasputin insulted some high government officials who happened to be in the same night club with him. Eventually, Rasputin became a notorious figure and was hated and despised by practically every loyal subject of the Czar.



And yet Rasputin never exercised the power which was attributed to him. The Czar listened to him, believing that he was a true representative of the masses of the Russian people. And, undoubtedly, it was correct — Rasputin was a typical Russian mujik, but the Czar seldom followed his advice.

The power of Rasputin was created by some government officials who were eager to grant his requests, hoping that by doing so they would win the favor of the Imperial family. This part of Rasputin's activities was practically unknown to the Czar, because the majority of government officials refused to receive him in their offices, and the fact remains that when in December, 1916, Rasputin was killed by Prince Youssoupoff, he was absolutely penniless. Simanovitch, secretary of Rasputin, amassed a fortune!

After the revolution, this secretary wrote a book which was published in Russia. The title was « A Jew Behind the Throne ». In this book, Simonovitch tried to prove that Rasputin had a strong influence on the Czar and he, Simonovitch, exercised a very strong influence on Rasputin, which, undoubtedly, he did.

## **RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN EUROPE DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES**

### **CHAPTER XXII**

Right after the peace treaty between Spain and the United States was signed (August 12, 1898), Count M. Muraviev, at that time Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, invited to his office in St. Petersburg ambassadors and diplomatic representatives of all foreign countries, accredited at that time to the government of the Czar, and read to them a manifesto of Czar Nicholas II on the necessity to limit armaments. The declaration of the Czar stated that a continuous increase in armaments represented a heavy burden for every country and was leading to inevitable world conflict.

Delivery of the manifesto was timed with the end of the Spanish-American War so as not to embarrass both belligerents.

This manifesto of the Czar took European powers by surprise, and was met with resentment and suspicion.

France, then an ally of Russia, was unreconciled to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and was inclined to consider the Russian declaration as some kind of insult to her national pride. Besides, from all the evidence, there was looming a war between France and Great Britain — at that very moment the Anglo-Egyptian forces won a crushing victory over the Dervishes at Omdurman and occupied Khartoum, threatening the French at Fashoda.

Emperor Wilhelm of Germany regarded any limitation of armaments as an invasion of his sovereignty. « Imagine »,

he wired to the Czar, « a Monarch dissolving his regiments sacred with centuries-old history and traditions! ».

The Russian government itself did not sincerely believe in the possibility of any armaments limitations. At that time, Russian financial resources did not permit the government to re-arm the Russian army with modern rapid-fire field guns. Russia was helplessly behind in the arms race; hence, a Russian desire for limitation of armaments.

The only groups that greeted enthusiastically the manifesto of the Czar were the liberals and the pacifists in every country.

In spite of all the resentment and all the difficulties, the Russian government issued numerous invitations, and the opening of the International Peace Conference, representing twenty-six nations, took place at the Hague on the 18th of May, 1899. The conference remained in session for about two months.

Discussions on the question of arms limitations did not bring any results, but the conference established a World Court of Arbitration and adopted certain modifications of the rules of warfare. The conference did not spare any effort trying to make conditions of war in the future more humane.

The results of the Hague Conference were very disappointing, because arbitration of any disagreement was not made obligatory. However, the delegates felt a necessity to satisfy public opinion and, therefore, a very unimportant case — a dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain — was presented to the World Court of Arbitration. This dispute was successfully solved by the decision of the Tribunal, and a few days later, without any arbitration, Great Britain went to war against the Boers in Transvaal.

The Conference assembled for the second time in 1907, with the same disappointing results. At the time of the First World War, all measures adopted by the Hague Conference modifying the rules of warfare were thoroughly forgotten. However, Czar Nicholas II had the right to claim to be the first head of state to call for an international peace conference, already at the end of the XIX century!

At that time neither Emperor Wilhelm of Germany nor the Czar himself could foresee the destructive force of the

coming world conflict and the disastrous results of this conflagration in which perished the old empires, the old ideals and traditions!

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At the end of the Russo-Japanese War in July, 1905, the Czar made an effort to get rid of an undesirable inheritance left to him by his father — the alliance of Russia with the Republic of France — the notorious « Entente Cordiale ».

Czar Alexander III broke away from the League of the Three Emperors and pulled Russia into an alliance with France. At the beginning, it was a secret one. From the Russian point of view, it was definitely a defensive compact, but France was not satisfied with the defensive character of this alliance. After a shameful defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, France was looking for revenge.

In Russia itself, under the influence of some very prominent people who hated the Germans for some reason, such as the Dowager-Empress Maria Fedorovna, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch, the Montenegro girls, and some influential Slavophiles, Russian alliance with France eventually became not only official, but a very aggressive one.

Russia was definitely on the wrong side of the fence. The Russian empire was placed in a position that, disregarding the outcome of the coming war, would make defeat for the Russian empire inevitable. **In case of victory of the empires of Central Europe, Russia, as a country, would lose the war. In case of a defeat of these empires, the principle of monarchy would suffer a fatal blow and Russia, as an empire, would lose.**

The attitude of the French Republic towards Russia was outrageous! At the time of the Russo-Japanese War, when the Russian fleet from the Baltic Sea proceeded around Europe and Africa to the Far East, France refused to supply Russian warships with coal, and denied the facilities of the French ports to the Russian fleet. For instance, at Madagascar, the French governor gave permission to the Russian warships to remain in the harbor only twenty-four hours. As a result, they were loaded with coal from German transports in the open sea. The loading was done with enormous difficulty as stormy weather and high waves endangered the lives of personnel.

It was Germany who supplied the Russian fleet with coal all the way to the Far East. Furthermore, Germany guaranteed to Russia the safety of her western frontiers, and made it possible for Russia to concentrate her armed forces in Manchuria.

In July, 1905, the Czar met Emperor Wilhelm at Björkö, at the coast of Finland, and the two monarchs signed a defensive treaty of alliance. Under this treaty, France was to be invited to adhere to this alliance at a later date. This treaty was actually directed against Great Britain, and if it had remained in force in 1914, the First World War would have been avoided.

Unfortunately, already in September of the same year, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch, Count Witte, at that time President of the Cabinet, and Count Lamsdorff, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, persuaded the Czar that this treaty with Germany contradicted the Russian treaty with France (*Entente Cordiale*) which they considered to preserve at any price. The Czar was very reluctant, but finally conceded, and this treaty with Germany was cancelled.

It was the last attempt to change the combination of powers in Europe. From that time on, a world war became practically inevitable. It was only a question of time.

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In October, 1908, Austria-Hungary announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This action precipitated the « Bosnia Crisis ».

According to the Treaty of Reichstadt, concluded in 1876 by Czar Alexander II with Emperor Franz-Josef, Russia already had given her consent to the annexation of these two provinces by Austria.

At the Congress of European Powers in Berlin in 1880, at the urgent request of Prince Gorchakoff, Russian Plenipotentiary, Austria agreed to postpone an outright annexation and to get these two provinces « for occupation and administration », but now, about forty years later, when it became obvious that the Russian aggressive policy in the Far East ended in a fiasco, and when Russian attention was

concentrated on the Balkans, Baron von Aehrenthal, Austrian Foreign Minister, decided to confirm the right of Austria-Hungary to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He secured the consent of Alexander Isvolsky, Russian Foreign Minister, to annexation in exchange for his agreeing to the opening of the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles to Russian ships of war.

The two provinces were annexed on the 5-7 of October, 1908, but Great Britain and France, «our glorius allies», as these two countries were called in the Russian press during the First World War, objected to the opening of the straits. Therefore, Isvolsky could not get his share of the bargain, and, moreover, Russian public opinion cared little for the straits, but cared much for the Balkan Slavs, «our little brothers», as the Slavophiles used to call them.

Russia was ready to protest and war seemed imminent when Charykoff, at one time Russian Ambassador to Constantinople and Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs, presented to the Czar a copy of the agreement of Reichstadt.

In Russia this agreement was kept secret by the Russian government. As a matter of fact, it was so secret that even Czar Nicholas II did not know the exact terms. After reading a copy of the treaty presented to him by Mr. Charykoff, the Czar realized that he had no right to object to Austria's actions.

At the same time Peter Stolypin, Russian Prime Minister, declared that as long as he was in power, he would do everything humanly possible to avoid war until his reform would be fully established, and Russia would become strong and healthy. He felt that with millions of Russian peasants living in archaic communes, who were not as yet full and equal citizens of the empire, Russia could not be involved in any war.

The fact that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was accepted by the Russian government, without protest, aroused indignation among Russian intellectuals, and especially among the Slavophiles. In their opinion Serbia was now getting into the sphere of Austrian influence. It seemed that for the Slavophiles interests of Serbia were much more important than interests of their own country! They were ready to plunge Russia into war, sacrificing millions of Rus-

sian lives, to protect Serbia from an imaginary danger of being swallowed by Austria.

Especially excited was Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholavevitch, who had two important personal reasons for it.

First, the Grand Duke knew that in case of war in Europe, he was to be appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, and he was eager to prove that he was well-suited for the post.

Second, the Grand Duke was married to Anastasia of Montenegro, whose oldest sister Zorka was married to King Peter Karageorgevich of Serbia, and the Grand Duke felt that by protecting Serbia, he was protecting his family's interests. Unfortunately, the Grand Duke had a very limited mentality and an unlimited opinion of his military talents.

## THE COUNTRY OF THE PIG FARMERS

### CHAPTER XXIII

At the time of the First World War and revolution which followed, Empress Alexandra Fedorovna was accused of being a German and of having pro-German sympathies. Of course, the Empress, before her marriage to Czar Nicholas II, was a German princess, but by education she was English. She was greatly influenced by her grandmother the old Queen Victoria, who, after the death of her consort, Prince Albert, was leading a very secluded life in the company of John Brown.

Like her royal grandmother, the Empress Alexandra was convinced that courtiers and members of society who stood near the throne were wicked. For the sake of her son, who suffered from haemophilia, she was inclined to lead the same secluded life as her English grandmother. In relations with other people she was shy and nervous and her shyness was taken usually for haughtiness. The unfortunate woman was not popular in Russia, but there was no reason to accuse her of pro-German sympathies. As a matter of fact, she did not like Emperor Wilhelm of Germany because, in her opinion, the Emperor was unfair to her brother the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt.

On the other hand, the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna was very much at ease in her relations with people. She had a friendly attitude towards everyone and was well-liked in Russia. At all official social functions, the Dowager Empress stole the show. Besides, the Dowager Empress did not turn over to the young Empress the jewelry



which right-fully belonged to the reigning empress, and Empress Alexandra was forced to be content with the jewelry of the wife of the Heir-Apparent. The pride and vanity of Empress Alexandra, a young and beautiful woman, suffered continuously.

Under these conditions it was not difficult for two Montenegro sisters to win the young Empress's favor. Both sisters were ready to serve the young Empress hand and foot, like chambermaids. They appealed to the vanity of the young woman.

The dream of Anastasia of Montenegro was to become a Russian Grand Duchess. As a wife of Prince George Romanovsky, Duke of Leuchtenberg, she was only a princess. Her mind was made up; she divorced her husband in 1906. The fact that the approval of the Czar was won, in her divorce, proved to be a remarkable feat of diplomacy on her part. It proved also that Empress Alexandra exercised considerable influence over her husband, because, by tradition, divorce did not exist for a member of the Imperial family.

Anastasia of Montenegro timed her divorce with a period when the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch broke off with Madame Bourenin, or another lady who was his favorite at the moment, and was an easy target for attack. The Grand Duke and the Montenegro girl were married in Yalta, Crimea, in 1907.

And so it came to pass that the Russian Imperial family became related by marriage to the Serbian family of Karageorgevich and became involved indirectly in several murders. As a matter of fact, already in the second half of the XIX century, Russia became deeply involved in the Balkan's primitive politics.

Prior to the First World War, Serbia was a country of pig farmers. There was no hereditary nobility, no class of intelligentsia, and people were uneducated. For some four hundred years Serbia had been a part of the Ottoman Empire and had been ruled by the Turks. The Serbs periodically rose against the Turks and fought them, hiding in the mountainous part of the country. Only at the beginning of the XIX century, among them appeared a leader. His name was Kara George (« Black George »). He was a pig farmer.

too. It was said that Kara George shot and killed his own father because the old man faltered in resisting the Turks.

In 1804 there was a Serbian uprising which ended more or less successfully for the Serbs. Kara George was at the head of the uprising, but in 1813 some new Turkish forces arrived in Serbia and Kara George fled to Austria.

At that moment another pig tycoon by the name of Milosh Obren appeared. Milosh Obren also fought the Turks, but he appeared on the scene as a better diplomat. He negotiated with the Turks and they agreed to grant autonomy to Serbia on the conditions that the Serbs recognize Turkish suzerainty and would pay an annual tribute to them. Milosh Obren, proclaimed himself and his descendants hereditary Princes of Serbia, which act outraged Kara George and his followers. One day the new Serbian prince received a basket with the head of Kara George. Nobody knew whether Milosh Obren sent the assassins to kill his rival or if it was a gift to him from some well-wisher. But from that moment on, for about a century, there was vendetta between the two families.

In May, 1868, Prince Michael Obrenovich, a descendant of Milosh Obren, was assassinated by the followers of Kara George's descendants. According to the Serbian tradition, the assassins celebrated their victory by thrusting their knives into the Prince's body again and again. Forty-five dagger wounds were counted afterwards. However, the followers of the Karageorgevich family did not succeed this time in establishing one of their family as a prince of Serbia. The heir to Prince Michael Obrenovich, Prince Milan Obrenovich, was proclaimed the ruler of Serbia. The fourteen year old prince arrived from Paris where he was finishing his education and was warmly greeted by his subjects. The popularity of Prince Michael Obrenovich was reflected in the attitude of the Serbs toward this young prince, and in a few years the very important question of finding a suitable bride for their young ruler occupied the minds of the majority of his subjects.

Milan had tried to find a princess of royal blood, but Napoleon III and other European monarchs had not been inclined to establish a blood relationship with a family of

pig tycoons. Milan ended by marrying Natalie Keshko, a girl of sixteen, whose father was a colonel in the Russian army. It was hoped by some Russian diplomats that this marriage would help in establishing a permanent tie between Russia and Serbia.

At that time two factions existed in Serbia; one favored Austria-Hungary and Western Europe in general; the other one consisted of ardent adherents to the idea of Pan-Slavism, « Slavonic Cause », Mother Russia, the Czar and the « Serbian Dream » of uniting Balkan Slavs, primarily Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, into one great independent Slavonic State.

The Obrenovich family leaned towards Habsburgs while the Karageorgevich family and their supporters favored Mother Russia and the Romanoffs.

Prince Milan noticed that although Russia was promoting the idea of an all-Slavonic union, Russian diplomats favored Bulgarians. Therefore, in 1877, the prince signed a secret treaty with Austria-Hungary accepting domination by the Habsburgs for his country. In the same year Czar Alexander II declared war on Turkey and won the war for the Balkan Slavs. At the congress of Berlin, Russia was deprived of the fruits of this victory, but the Balkan Slavs gained their independence. Therefore, many historians had been of the opinion that Prince Milan stabbed Mother Russia in the back and sold his country to the Habsburgs in return for the payment of his gambling debts.

Anyway, the rivalry of the two Empires in the Balkans increased and with the assassination of the liberal Czar Alexander II in 1881, and the ascension to the throne of his son, Czar Alexander III, an ardent Pan-Slav, this rivalry caused the dissolution of the League of the Three Emperors.

In the meantime, Prince Milan proclaimed himself a king at the ancient monastery of Zhitcha, where the medieval Serbian rulers had been crowned, and his Russian wife, Natalie, became a queen. The easygoing Milan usually fell under the spell of any attractive woman and this weakness caused a break in his marriage. The Russian diplomats tried to widen the rift between husband and wife with the idea of forcing King Milan to abdicate and of establishing Queen Natalie as a Regent of Serbia. Several attempts on

the life of Milan were made, but none succeeded. Finally, Milan abdicated in favor of his son, King Alexander Obrenovich.

The Russian government, in the meantime, had sent peddlers into Serbia to sell cheaply printed holy icons to the Serbian peasants. The Russian agents were trying hard to recruit them all into the Radical Party which promoted the ideas of the «Serbian Dream», Mother Russia and the Czar. The adherents of Peter Karageorgevich belonged to this party of the «Slavonic Cause» and the party gradually became the most prominent one in Serbia.

In 1893, the secret treaty signed by King Milan with Austria was published in French newspapers, to the great surprise and consternation of the Serbs. The Radical Party demanded the immediate accession to the throne of Peter Karageorgevich, but this movement was suppressed by force.

The young King Alexander Obrenovich fell in love with Draga Mashin, a lady-in-waiting of his mother. Draga was a granddaughter of a rich pig farmer who had loaned money to Milosh Obren. This money the prince never returned and the rich family of a pig farmer became poor. Being a pretty girl, Draga managed to marry a man by the name of Svetoazar Mashin, a Serbian civil employee, who was considerably older than his wife and who shortly afterwards died from alcoholism. A few years later Draga became a lady-in-waiting of Queen Natalie and, when the Queen was banished by Skupshtina (Parliament) and went to live in Biarritz, Draga went to live with her.

Alexander visited his mother, met Draga and fell in love with her. Draga was several years older than Alexander, but evidently Alexander needed not only a sweetheart but a woman who would guide him. Against the wish of his mother, Alexander married Draga and she became the Queen of Serbia, which caused strong resentment on the part of the Serbs. The point was that after the death of her first husband, Draga had been very liberal in the choice of her lovers. Belgrade was a small place at that time, and there was talk that Draga was being supported by her numerous wealthy men.

Count Witte, Russian Prime Minister and Secretary of the Treasury at that time, wrote in his memoirs that one day Peter Karageorgevich appeared in his office asking for a substantial subsidy. Count Witte refused flatly to finance him in any shape or form, but with the approval of Czar Nicholas II, Peter Karageorgevich received a substantial loan from a bank in Bessarabia. The loan was secured by his estate in Romania. Count Witte wrote that when he received him in his office he could not imagine that this middle-aged, modest man would in a short time be the King! « It was possible only through the cruel assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga », added Count Witte in his memoirs.

The assassination of King Alexander Obrenovich and his wife took place on June 11, 1903. They were killed under peculiarly atrocious circumstances. This murder was organized by Dragutin Dimitriyevich-Apis, a Serbian officer and imbued with rare cynicism and cruelty. Queen Draga was expecting a child and the assassins ripped open her abdomen. The bodies of the King and Queen were thrown out of a window of the palace onto the main street in Belgrade, where they were eaten by dogs and pigs. Those of my readers who would be interested in a detailed description of the Obrenovich-Karageorgevich vendetta, I refer to the book « The Mistresses », by Betty Kellen, chapter « The Serbian Nightmare ».

Peter Karageorgevich did not actually take an active part in this murder, but was a member of the group which perpetrated the crime. With the assassination of King Alexander and his wife, the Obrenovich family became extinct, and Peter Karageorgevich became the King of Serbia.

Great Britain withheld recognition of the new government for some time due to the very lenient attitude of the government of the new King towards the assassins, but Russia, indeed at once, congratulated King Peter on his accession to the throne.

In March, 1909, the oldest son of King Peter Karageorgevich, the Crown Prince George, was to abdicate his right of succession due to the fact that in a fit of passion he mortally injured his valet. His younger brother, Alexander, thus became Heir-Apparent.

And, finally, another murder was the assassination of the Austrian Heir-Apparent, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, at Sarajevo, on the 28th of June, 1914.

Professor V. Mayevsky made a thorough documentary research of this crime and in his book «Inter-relationship between Russia and Serbia», published in New York in 1960, in answer to the question: «Who directly caused the outbreak of the First World War?», there was given a well-founded and definite reply: «The assassin of the Archduke was a Serb by the name of Gabrilo Princip, who arrived in Sarajevo directly from Belgrade. He lived in Belgrade and it was there that he was prepared for this crime and was supplied with necessary weapons and help by other Serbs».

American Professor I. Remak, who studied Serbian sources, asserted that the assassination of the Austrian Archduke was organized by the same Dimitriyevich-Apis who organized the assassination of King Alexander Obrenovich and Queen Drage in 1903. This Dimitriyevich-Apis established in Serbia a secret terrorist society by the name of «The Black Hand». Furthermore, Professor Remak asserted that the Serbian Crown Prince Alexander, who was at that time Regent of Serbia, and Pasich, Serbian Prime Minister, knew about the crime they intended to commit. It was proved that the assassins had been in Belgrade, and had been secretly smuggled across the Drina River into Bosnia, after receiving hand grenades and revolvers from the Serbs. Pasich, Serbian Prime Minister, confided this secret to his friend, Count Sforza, on the Island of Corfu. This aforesaid knowledge of a crime to be committed made the future King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Pasich, Prime Minister of Serbia, accomplices to this crime.

There has not been any doubt that Count Berchtold, Austrian Prime Minister in 1914, who succeeded Count Aehrenthal (Baron Aehrenthal was created Count in 1909), was right when he insisted that the plot to assassinate the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand originated and was organized in Belgrade.

Italian historian, Luigi Albertini, after exhaustive documentary research and interviews of surviving key wit-

nesses, reached the conclusion that it was Dimitriyevich-Apis who organized the assassination of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and his wife, Duchess Sophie von Hohenberg, in Serajevo.

Colonel Dragutin Dimitriyevich, Chief of the Military Intelligence Department of the Serbian army, was known in conspiratorial circles (the Black Hand organization) as Apis. According to Albertini, Colonel Dimitriyevich-Apis was on very friendly terms with N. H. Harting, Russian Minister in Belgrade, and particularly with Colonel (later General) Victor Artamonov.

Colonel Artamonov and Dimitriyevich-Apis conducted joint secret service operations across the Austrian border, Dimitriyevich-Apis supplying secret agents and Artamonov contributing large sums of money out of the secret fund which was at his disposal as the Russian Military Attaché. They both shared military intelligence collected by their agents, who were engaged at the same time in subversive propaganda, distributing copies of a monthly publication called « Piedmont », an organ of the Black Hand organization. The aim of this terrorist organization was to achieve the union of all the Serbs, including those living within the limits of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

It would be inconceivable to believe that Colonel Artamonov was uninformed about the plan to assassinate the Heir-Apparent to the Austrian throne, whose morganatic wife was a Czech woman (born Countess Sophie Chotek). The Archduke Franz-Ferdinand intended to combat the separatist tendencies of Serbs and Croats by offering the South Slavs home rule in a state of their own within the limits of the empire. Such a grant would deal a mortal blow to all the dreams of the Serbian nationalists as well of the Russian Slavophiles.

It would also be inconceivable to suppose that the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch and his scheming wife, Anastasia of Montenegro, were not informed about the state of affairs of their nephew, the Crown Prince Alexander of Serbia, especially since the Russian Grand Duke had been anxiously awaiting a war against Austria and Germany. Reporting in advance of the plot to assassinate the Austrian Archduke,

Colonel Artamonov could count on a favorable reception of his news by the Grand Duke and his powerful support.

Only one question remains unanswered: Was Czar Nicholas II informed about the actual role played in the assassination by Colonel Dimitriyevich-Apis, head of the Intelligence Service of Serbia, by Crown Prince Alexander, by the Russian Colonel Artamonov and the others?

There has not been any doubt the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholayevitch exercised a decisive influence on the Czar at this critical moment and made the Czar forget the oath he gave at the time of his coronation — to uphold first and above all the interests of Russia!

At the critical moment in 1914 only the interests of a group of irresponsible schemers were upheld, schemers who did not hesitate to commit murder!

In 1914 Russia became involved in the bloodiest war, without being prepared to fight, against an enemy armed with the most modern weapons. There was a shortage of ammunition in the Russian army, shortage of clothing, shortage of boots. Russian railroads were inadequate to carry necessary supplies to the fighting front, Russian industry was in its infancy and was unable to produce all that the army needed.

The government mobilized all able-bodied men from the age of eighteen up to forty-four, some fifteen million men, but many of them, hundreds and thousands of them, had to stay in the barracks because they had no suitable clothes, and no boots. They were actually barefoot and, staying in the barracks, spent their time in drinking tea and playing cards. The shortage of boots and adequate clothing produced much more tragic results at the fighting front where many soldiers had frostbitten hands and feet, necessitating amputation.

Many soldiers, sometimes a complement of the whole company, received only wooden sticks instead of rifles, made in the form of firearms. At the fighting front there was a decided shortage of artillery shells and Russian troops were trying desperately to stem well-organized German attacks without adequate ammunition by sheer superiority in



numbers. Some regiments lost their full complements of men several times. There was a decided shortage of officers. Russian losses were terrific! According to authoritative sources, Russian army losses were four million men killed, crippled and missing in action, far more than all the allied armies put together!

France saw in this war an opportunity for revenge after the humiliating defeat it suffered in 1870. Great Britain saw in this war an opportunity to get rid of a competitor. British industry, with its archaic methods of production, could not compete with inexpensive German products of good quality which were gradually replacing British goods on the world's market. Even the German Navy was getting much too strong for Great Britain!

But Russia could gain nothing in this war. Russia did not need any territorial gains. As a matter of fact, Russia and Germany supplemented each other, Russia selling Germany grain, lumber and other raw material and buying, in exchange, much needed products of German industry. If the last Russian trade agreement with Germany, signed in 1904, was not very profitable for Russia, it was not worth sacrificing millions of men to change this treaty to a more advantageous one. The balance of trade with Germany was in Russia's favor anyway.

The Russian intelligentsia were trying to distort the truth, stating that Russia was fighting to get the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles needed for Russian trade. They were deliberately misrepresenting the facts. They knew only too well that the empires of Central Europe were not so much opposed to the Russian acquisition of the straits as were the Russian allies. Especially for Great Britain, it was inconceivable to permit Russia to have an access to the Mediterranean, so that Russia could menace the life-line of the British Empire to India.

After two and a half years of fighting, in every Russian family some men were killed, crippled, or wounded. Slowly discontent was growing. Russian masses could not understand what this unprecedented slaughter was for! It is difficult to understand why a revolt did not break out sooner. In any other country, disregarding the form of

government, under similar conditions, a revolt would have broken out. In Russia the implicit faith of the Russian people in their Czar, and centuries-old traditions, were still holding people together until, finally, in March, 1917, after two and a half years of war, revolution broke out.

The Czar and his family paid for this fatal mistake with their lives in the cellar of the Ipatiyev house in Ekatherinburg, and Russia was drenched in blood by the Communists!

THIS WAS THE PATH OF DESTINY THAT LED TO  
THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE'S DESTRUCTION AND DOWNFALL!

## RETURN TO KOLPINO

### CHAPTER XXIV

In 1907, my father decided to visit our estate Kolpino. He had been absent for some twelve years and received information that our superintendent, Peter Brunner, was selling lumber from our forests without his knowledge and approval.

In June, 1907, my father and mother and I went by steamer via Sebastopol to Odessa where we stopped at the Hotel London on the Boulevard de Richelieu. From our rooms we had an excellent view of Odessa's harbor. Right in front of the hotel was a wide stone and concrete staircase leading down to the harbor. The staircase was so long that next to it, two specially built cable cars were continuously going up and down, providing transportation for the people who did not want to walk hundreds of steps. At the bottom of the staircase were railroad tracks, and freight cars were moving day and night. Odessa was the largest commercial port on the Black Sea.

We stayed in Odessa several days, and my father took me to the former mansion of his late uncle, Stanislaw Juriewicz, which was now Odessa's Public Library.

The fortune left by Stanislaw Juriewicz to his oldest son, Mieczyslaw, was cut down considerably by the reckless spending of Mieczyslaw and his son, Frederyk. The mansion was sold, too, but Frederyk was still hanging on to Berszada. Paul Juriewicz, a son of Stanislaw from his second marriage, and a first cousin of my father, was married to Princess Elisabeth Woroniecka, and was at that time the President of the Racing Association in Warsaw.

When my father and I entered the imposing building of the Public Library, I noticed excitement in his usually calm countenance. This building was bringing back to him all the eventful years of his youth and his marriage to Adela. He did not pay any attention to the book shelves and book cases that now occupied every room. In a low voice, he was telling me that this room was a foyer, and here was a big livingroom, and there was a « Blue drawing room », and there a cardroom, and so on. In every room, there were ceilings with handwrought sculptured friezes, mosaic floors with inlaid pieces of red and black wood, huge mahogany doors with heavy bronze handles. Finally, we entered a comparatively small area, and my father told me that it was a boudoir of the second Madame Juriewicz, the beautiful Lady Weinczeslawa! There was nothing in this room now to remind one that it had been the boudoir of a beautiful woman... only book cases stood there in a row by the wall.

When we finally emerged from this building and were on the street again, my father took a deep breath.

« And so it goes », he said. « Even a fortune which appeared inexhaustible was not large enough to stand the reckless spending of two generations. And the greater part of the Russian landed nobility are losing their fortunes, their estates are being sold to the State Bank of Peasants, organized by the government, to be resold to the peasants. It will not take long before most of the fertile lands of the nobles will pass into the hands of the peasants. The good Lord was merciful to Russia that Stolypin finally passed a law permitting peasants to get out of their communes! Otherwise, who could produce the necessary surplus of grain to feed Russian cities and towns? If all landed estates were taken away from the landowners, Russia would have a famine! ».

I remembered those words of my father when, after the revolution, as a result of the confiscation of the landed estates, there was a terrific famine in Russia (1918-1922).

The Communist government accused the peasants of hoarding their grain and other products and of criminally sabotaging the newly created « Government of the People ».

The Communists accused them of being the « enemies of the working class », and organized armed bands of city workers for the purpose of taking by force hoarded grain of the peasants. These bands were armed by the Soviet Government with rifles and machine guns.

The real reason for the hoarding of grain by the peasants was the inflation of Russian currency and lack of manufactured goods. Peasants were reluctant to part with the little grain they had, getting worthless paper money in exchange. Millions of them had been soldiers in the Russian army during the World War I and had brought home their ammunition. An actual war began between cities and towns on one side, and villages on the other. Famine spread throughout the Volga region with its fertile soil. There were registered cases of cannibalism. An American, in the service of Hoover's Relief organization, disappeared, having been devoured by hungry peasants.

But at that time, in Odessa, my father did not realize how prophetic he was!

From Odessa we moved to Kiev, ancient capital of Prince Oleg, Prince Igor and St. Vladimir, the first rulers of Russia. For some reason, Russian historians were always looking to the Byzantine empire, trying to find the facts about the very beginning of Russian history. They neglected completely the Scandinavian sources, although Prince Rurik (in Scandinavian, Rorek), the first Russian ruler (862-879) was a Viking and a member of the Scoldung dynasty.

My father took me to the Kievo-Pechersky Monastery. This monastery, with many churches and buildings, had been built on the western bank of the Dnieper River, which was rising high above water level. Some of the buildings were connected by underground passages with a series of caverns and caves in which hermits and monks used to live. A number of these hermits were canonized and became saints of the Eastern Church. Visitors of the monastery were conducted by monks to different caves, where they could kneel and kiss relics of saints, while placing money on a plate which stood by the relic, as their contribution to the holy place. This monastery provided an additional income to the Metropolitan (Cardinal) of Kiev of some fifty thousand gold Roubles annually.

The underground passages were narrow, with low ceilings, and filled with the strong odor of incense. The monks with long hair which never was cut by a barber, and long beards, looking very much like savages, produced a gloomy, rather horrifying impression on me, and I asked my father to get me out of these catacombs as quickly as possible. Although on my mother's side I had plenty of Russian blood, and one of my great-grandmothers was a Tatar girl, the sight of this monastery, which was greatly venerated by the Russians, did not arouse in me any religious feeling, and I was glad when we returned to our hotel on Krestchatik (the main street in Kiev).

At last we arrived in Vitebsk, and stopped at the Kushliss Hotel on Zamkovaya Street. I was struck by the Gothic towers of many Roman Catholic cathedrals in this city, and the Jewish crowds on the streets.

As soon as we entered the lobby of the hotel, being followed by porters who carried our numerous suitcases, my father was surrounded by a crowd of Jewish « factors ». « Factors » were familiar figures throughout Poland, Lithuania and Belorussia in those days. They were like guides, who used to attach themselves to the hotel guests. Such a guide followed you continuously, trying to guess what you would wish to do next. You could order him to mail a letter for you at the postoffice, or to get a watchmaker, also a Jew, into your room at the hotel, to repair your watch, or to get tickets for the next performance at a local theater, or to find out all about prices for grain in Windawa and in Riga — in short, anything. At the same time, your « factors » considered it their duty to supply you with all kinds of news and gossip of the city. At times, they would be annoying, but on the whole, extremely obliging, being satisfied with very little pay, and in a short time you would find your factor indispensable.

My father, being by nature generous and lazy, was attended usually not by one « factor » but by several. From their point of view he was an ideal customer. And now they recognized him and surrounded him on all sides.

At this moment, an old Jew with a gray beard and whiskers, dressed in a lapserdack, a sort of long overcoat

worn by the orthodox Jews, who had stood quietly in a corner, all of a sudden jumped at my father and attempted to grab his hand to kiss it. My father drew back his hand quickly; but, recognizing the old man, patted him on the shoulder. Then he turned to me, and said, addressing him:

« Look, Yossel, what a big boy I have! »

To my great surprise yossel approached me, with tears in his eyes, and kissed my forehead. Then he stroked my head gently with one hand and with the other wiping tears which continued to roll down his cheeks. He was overcome with emotion at seeing his former « Pan » and his son.

I found Vitebsk very picturesque and interesting, but, unfortunately, my parents did not stay there long.

My parents were facing the fact that Emilia, the divorced wife of my father, continued to live in Kolpino. Therefore, it was decided that my mother would stay in Nevel, a small town situated about thirty miles from Kolpino, and my father and I would visit Kolpino alone.

We arrived in Nevel by a passenger train, and at the railroad station took a couple of « isvostchik » and ordered them to drive us to the best hotel in town. My father knew this hotel and its owner well. It was owned by Mr. Papernov. When our « isvostchiks » stopped in front of the hotel, my father alighted from his carriage and entered a store next door to the entrance of the hotel. Being very curious, I followed him closely. We found the store completely deserted except for a boy about eleven or twelve years old, who stood behind the counter.

« Are you Papernov's son? » my father asked. The boy nodded « yes ».

« Where is your father? »

« Tatale? » (father in the Yiddish dialect), repeated the boy. « He is in the cellar ».

« What is he doing there? »

« What is he doing there? » the boy repeated again. « He is making Madeira ».

It was a little strange to find a Jew in a small town in Belorussia making a well-known brand of Portuguese wine in his cellar. My father laughed.

« Call him! » he ordered the boy.

In a few minutes Papernov-father appeared in the store, and after many greetings, lamentations, and expressions of joy, the two best rooms of the hotel were placed at our disposal, and our suitcases were carried there.

The same evening my father and I proceeded by horse carriage to Kolpino. The horse and carriage were placed at my father's disposal by the same Mr. Papernov.

We arrived in Kolpino at night. My father was overcome with emotion. He pointed out to me the house, the park and different buildings and gave explanations about everything, although it was dark and I could barely see anything. The superintendent, Peter Brunner, was expecting us and took us to the guest house, where a suite of rooms had been prepared for us.

The next morning we went for breakfast to the main house. When we entered the diningroom, Emilia threw herself in my father's arms, weeping with joy at seeing her Stas again. She covered me with kisses and immediately proceeded to feed me some home-made mazurki (cookies), jelly and freshly made coffee with thick cream.

At least twenty people were sitting around the dining table; my half-sister Nussia, with her husband and their four children, with a German Fraulein; Miss Alexandra Bogomolec, a spinster, (emotionally upset out of sympathy to her friend Emilia); Leonid Skorulsky, a neighboring landowner, who had lost his fortune and had lived ever since at Kolpino... and several guests.

My father was in the best of humor, graciously giving to everyone a chance to kiss him, smiling and answering innumerable questions.

After breakfast, I explored the house.

I made good friends with my nephew, Nicky, the son of my half-sister, who was three and a half years older than myself. My three nieces, Mary, Natalie, and Nina, attracted my attention. I was a little shy as I had never played much with little girls. Nicky took me to the Kolpino Lake, which actually was a quarter of a mile away from



the house, to swim. Here we had a wonderful time. Because I had lived on the shore of the Black Sea, I was a better swimmer than he, but he knew much more about shooting than I did, and I was a little envious of this superior knowledge.

My father, being in a perfect mood, postponed indefinitely the dismissal of the superintendent, and presented me with a horse. I petted the horse, brought him sugar, and could not sleep at night, worrying if he was well taken care of.

Next day, I rode through the fields and forests of the estate. There were beautiful vistas on it. Everything was new and interesting to me. I realized that here my ancestors had lived, and here I would live, too, when I grew up. Visions of the beautiful Crimea gradually faded from my memory. A few days later, my father received a letter stating that my mother had moved to the estate «Gregorovo», which belonged to the family of de Grave.

My mother's youngest brother, Baron Alexis Rokassowsky, was brought up in the Corps des Pages in St. Petersburg, but had been expelled for bad behavior and unsatisfactory results in his studies. He was transferred to the army, where he served as a private (junker) until, finally, he received his first commission. He served as «Kornet» (Lieutenant) in the Hussar Regiment of Pavlograd for about a year, retired and settled down in Dubokrai, which he received as his share of the estate of my grandfather Rokassowsky. He married Helen de Grave, a daughter of a neighboring landowner, but remained just as reckless and senseless as when he was a boy. He continued to live above his income, borrowing money from Jewish lenders, until, finally, his estate Dubokrai was sold at an auction. Alexis Rokassowsky was ruined.

In the meantime, his wife died, leaving him three children, two boys and a girl. The older boy, Alexis, Jr., entered the Corps des Pages, the girl Alexandra was in a private school, and my uncle, with his youngest son, Platon, moved to Gregorovo, an estate which belonged to his late wife and her two sisters. By this time, he was trying to drown his sorrow in drinking. He drank to excess, but as

soon as he learned that my mother was alone in a hotel in Nevel, he considered it his duty to bring her to Gregorovo.

Gregorovo was only about twenty miles from Kolpino, and the following morning, my father and I went there. We stayed at Gregorovo for a couple of days, and I noticed that my father did not like his brother-in-law, but for the sake of my mother, was polite and kind to him. My father invited him and Platon, who was about my age, to come with us to Kolpino.

There was then a great family reunion at Kolpino. The divorced wife of my father threw her arms around my mother, and both women cried with emotion. From that moment, they started to call each other by first names — Emilia and Vera — and became good friends. Only the peasants could not understand the situation, and, shaking their heads, they insisted that the Lord of Kolpino had two wives.

That autumn we stayed at Kolpino. Trees of the old park were turning different colors, leaves were falling, the squirrels were jumping in the bare branches of the trees. I learned to ride, and usually went in the evenings through a path of a thick forest to one of the lakes to watch the sunset. The lake appeared to be a piece of a broken mirror, thrown by an unseen hand between the hills. It reflected the hilly shore covered by forest, and the sky with passing clouds of different shapes. I learned to love autumn, and later on, I liked it still more for the hunting season that began in September.

Late in the fall we returned to Yalta. From that year on, we used to visit Kolpino every year, staying there for three or four months in the summer and early autumn.

## PEASANT PROBLEM

### CHAPTER XXV

As soon as constitutional form of government was granted to Russia on the 17-30 of October, 1905, a new political party was organized. This party was called «The Party of the 17th of October». As the name implied, the political program of the party was based on the Czar's manifesto granted on that date, and my father was one of the first to join it.

My father did not approve of autocracy. From his point of view, it was not fair to blame one man, the Czar, for the actions, sometimes very stupid, of every governor, of every government official, just because they all acted in the name of the Czar. On the other hand, my father was very far from being an admirer of democracy. From his point of view, democracy was well represented by Russian peasant communes (obstchina) where an illiterate and stupid majority ruled without restraint. A man with intelligence above average had no chance unless he was able to get out of his commune.

In the opinion of my father, at the head of the government there should always be a man who had received a broad education, and who was well versed in the history of his country; who stood above all classes of society, above every group and political party; who did not need to seek re-elections; who certainly was independent financially and whose only aim was the welfare of his country as a whole. A man with a broad vision who cared for the future of his country even after his own death, on account of his

natural desire to leave to his son the best heritage. My father was a monarchist through and through, but in his opinion, the people of the country had an inherent right to have a voice in the government.

And my father gladly accepted the constitution granted by the Czar in October, 1905, as a basis for constructive work and the development of the empire.

However, my father was a landowner first of all, and he realized only too well that the greatest, the most vital problem of Russia was not solved by the manifesto granted in October, 1905. The peasants represented the great bulk of the population of the Empire and their problem was not solved. The great majority of the Russian peasants did not understand the word « constitution », in Russian « constitutzia ». Some of them got an idea that it was a first name for girls just like Constantin was a name for boys.

The landed nobility understood better than anyone else the real needs of the peasants. The nobles realized that unreasonable demands for confiscations of their estates were ridiculous and would not solve the problem. Such confiscation would inevitably result in a famine in Russia. The nobles hated and feared the word « commune » (obstchina in Russian) and blamed the system of communes for all misfortunes of the Russian peasants. They realized that as long as this system existed, they could not be safe living on their estates. It was life on the brink of a volcano!

A marxist publication, « The Beginning » (in Russia, « Nachalo ») in 1889 noted with satisfaction that the standard of living of the peasants was lowest in the provinces where they owned more land, even with the quality of soil much better, but where the peasant communes were the only form of the peasant ownership of the land! The liberal intelligentsia was of the opinion that the peasant problem could be solved by granting peasants equality of rights and political freedom, and by distributing among them the lands of the Church, of the landowners, and of the Crown. But even the most liberal economists realized that abolition of landed estates in Russia would inevitably lead to disaster!

The liberal economists' opinion was based on the productivity of the lands. The peasants' lands were known

for the lowest productivity. It was the landed estates that produced the surplus of grain needed to feed Russian towns and cities, and also needed for export.

In January, 1902, the Czar organized an ad hoc committee to determine the agrarian needs of the empire. The committee consisted of twenty high government officials, mostly members of the Cabinet. The opinions were controversial, and even the majority of peasants themselves did not know where the root of the evil was. The committee decided to organize special committees in all provinces of European Russia. These committees had the right to question and to consult anyone they considered necessary. At this moment, D. Sipiagin, Secretary of the Interior, and a very important member of the committee, was killed by a terrorist. This murder antagonized the Czar, but the work of the committee and subcommittees continued.

The great majority of the committees declared themselves against peasant communes. However, Konstantin Pobedonostsev and some other members of the Cabinet happened to be faithful adherents to archaic communes, and in 1903, on the advice of Vyacheslav Plehve, Secretary of the Interior, who succeeded Sipiagin, the work of the committees was stopped.

But after the Russo-Japanese War, about two thousand landed estates were burned down by the peasants, and the government then realized the importance of the peasants' problems.

In the spring of 1906, the Czar appointed Peter Stolypin to the post of Secretary of the Interior. Stolypin was a Marshal of Nobility in Kovno and for a short time Governor of the province of Grodno. During the difficult times of the Russo-Japanese War and the revolution which followed, he was Governor of the province of Saratov, where he proved to be an excellent administrator.

He risked his life freely on several occasions, restraining a revolutionary mob in a town, and restoring order in a village. He was practically the only Governor who maintained order in his province during this stormy time, and who won the respect even of his adversaries.

But, most important! Stolypin was a true representative of the landed nobility and knew the real needs of the peasants. In July of the same year, Stolypin was appointed to the post of Prime Minister. Stolypin dissolved Parliament (the first Duma) and according to paragraph 87 of the Constitution (1), on the 9-22 of November, 1906, passed a law permitting an individual peasant (or a village as a whole), if he so desired, to get his share of the land (« Nadel ») as his individual private property in one piece of land. Such a peasant would cease to be a member of his commune and would become an individual farmer.

It was necessary for Stolypin to pass this law without its being discussed in the Russian Duma, because he knew he would not win the necessary support for this measure. Reactionaries and revolutionaries, for different reasons, united in their ardent desire to preserve the archaic communes!

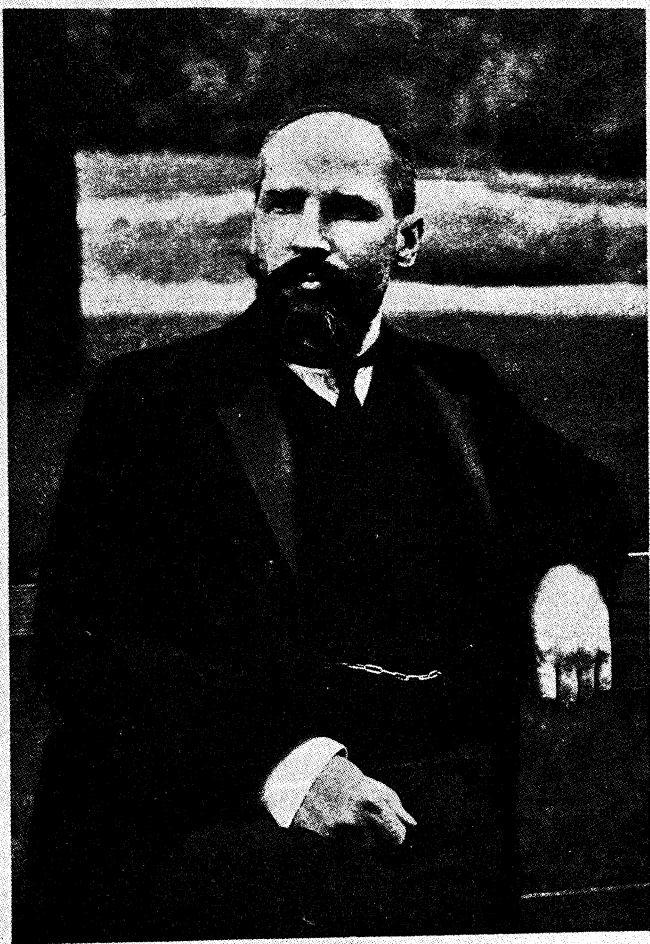
At the same time, Stolypin passed a law making peasants eligible for any rank in the government service. In other words, Stolypin freed Russian peasants of their communes (if they so desired), granting to them at the same time a complete equality of rights. It was the greatest reform since the Act of Emancipation of Czar Alexander II in 1861.

When this reform was first put into effect by Stolypin, the great masses of Russian peasants were reluctant to quit their communes. Their main worry was the small pasture each one of them would have for his horse and cow. Only gradually some of them agreed to become individual farmers. Those who agreed to it, became prosperous in a couple of years! Following their example, other peasants, many thousands of them, filled out their applications. The movement was gathering momentum with an ever increasing number of applicants. There was a decided shortage of surveyors

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(1) Paragraph 87 of the Constitution permitted the Czar, while Parliament was not in session, to enact the necessary laws without approval of the Parliament. These laws were supposed to be discussed and approved by the Parliament at some future date.

Note of the Author.



Петръ Аркадьевичъ  
СТОЛЫПИНЪ.

*Prime Minister Peter Arcadievtch STOLYPIN.*





measuring the land. Some of the peasants had to wait their turn for a year or more.

In spite of all these difficulties, in the period of only eight years preceding World War I, approximately twenty percent of all peasants became individual landowners. It appeared that Russia was getting on the right track to become a prosperous member among other Great European powers, and if the First World War had been avoided in 1914, and somehow postponed for a couple of decades, in spite of a revolution, Russia would never have become Communist! It was proven by actual fact that in those parts of the empire where the system of communes had not been introduced in 1861, such as Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, in spite of the terrific impact of the revolution and the highly publicized genius of Lenin, Communism was not established. All these parts became independent republics with a real democratic government established in every one of them.

The system of communes was never introduced to the natives of the Russian Caucasus, and the Georgians put up a stubborn fight against the Communists, until they were subdued by the detachments of the Red Army.

The system of communes never existed in Russian Siberia, Turkestan, and other Asiatic possessions of the empire. However, the population in those remote areas was very sparse. As a matter of fact, the entire population of all Russian possessions in Asia amounted to only about ten percent of the population of European Russia. Consequently, they could not offer any resistance to the armed forces of the Soviet government.

During the first few years of Stolypin's leadership, Russia enjoyed a new era of prosperity, an era of unprecedented industrial and economic growth, and everyone was looking hopefully for a bright future.

This tremendous industrial and economic growth continued up to the very outbreak of the First World War when, in the flames of the war, empires perished.

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My father believed that the reform of Stolypin, which permitted Russian peasants to become small proprietors and

full and equal subjects of the Empire, would make Russia immune to any socialist upheaval. Russia was an agricultural country, and Karl Marx's doctrine was supposed to appeal to the class of industrial workmen, the so-called «proletariat». In Russia, at that time, workmen of industry constituted less than ten percent of the population.

Only once, during the «Bosnia Crisis», my father made a very solemn statement in my presence. He said that if a revolution would some day break out in Russia and the Czar should be forced to abdicate, **Russia would inevitably become Communist.**

«It is obvious», he added, «with the great majority of the population living in communes, one cannot expect anything else».

I always remembered his prophetic words. My father knew Russian people better than the majority of Russian intellectuals, and certainly better than the Slavophiles, although the latter pretended to speak on behalf of the people.

## STOLYPIN'S REFORM

### CHAPTER XXVI

In March, 1909, Vasili von Hacken brought his wife, my half-sister, Nussia, to Yalta. Nussia had consumption and her doctors advised her to go to a warm climate.

Nussia and her husband arrived by train in Sebastopol, where they hired a carriage to drive them to Yalta. The road from Sebastopol to Yalta, from the Baidary Gates (Baidarskiye Vorota) down along the Crimean shore, was of a rare beauty. On one side of the road were the high vertical rocks, and on the other a breath-taking view of the mountain slope, with the road winding like a serpent between huge rocks, and, below, the great expansion of the sea.

When Nussia and her husband arrived at our house, Nussia was still under the spell of the beautiful scenery, while her husband was completely calm and indifferent to the beauty of nature. He was preoccupied with a new cigarette lighter that someone had presented to him.

The next day, Vasili von Hacken went back to Velikie Luki, leaving Nussia with us, parting with her much against her wishes. My father tried to be cheerful, but I could see that he was worried. He was informed by Emilia and by some friends that Nussia was very unhappy in her marriage. Her husband rarely stayed home in the evening, playing cards in a local club until all hours of the morning, and it was known that he had many affairs with other women. Yet Nussia was still very much in love, although she suffered a great deal. Many sleepless nights when she was waiting and worrying about her husband and his activities

had undermined her health and now, in the opinion of the doctors, it was a question of only six months, maybe a year.

My father knew it well, and realized that he was helpless to change the situation. He was very attentive to Nussia, and tried to be kind to his son-in-law, who was only a few years younger than him-self. In his conversations with Nussia, my father carefully avoided the topic of her marriage.

Nussia stayed with us until the end of May and then went back home. Early in June, the schools closed for the summer, and Nussia's children were anxious to get to Kolpino, where they usually spent their summer vacations.

When my parents and I arrived in Kolpino that year, Nussia and her children, together with their German Fraulein, were already there. Nussia was staying in bed most of the time. She was feverish and was losing weight.

While my father was in Kolpino, he spent much time every day talking to peasants or Jews who came to see him. Ever since the time of his resignation as a judge, peasants of his judicial district remembered him as one who was always fair to them. They all had a feeling of deep respect for him, and now they all came to him asking his advice.

My father usually received them in the guest house, where my parents and I occupied a suite of rooms, in a room which served as his office; sitting behind his desk he greeted them in a friendly way, never permitting anyone to kiss his hand, and asking them to sit down. He usually placed along the front of his desk a big box of cigarettes, containing over two hundred, and he invited them to smoke. My father insisted that they should smoke his cigarettes made of Turkish tobacco because he could not stand the heavy and biting odor of «makhorka», the local tobacco which Russian peasants smoked.

At that time, the reform of Stolypin was of paramount interest to all peasants, and although my father could tell in advance what questions they intended to ask, he never started the conversation. He was always ready to listen to them, to all their grievances, doubts and troubles. Their main worry was the small pasture each one of them would

have for his horse and cow, should they quit their communes. My father usually gave them ample time to tell in their own way their stories. He used to wait for a while after they finished talking, and only then he would begin to tell them his own ideas on the subject. He used their own expressions, in a language which was easily understandable to them. He told them that long walks were not beneficial for the cows and described to them some dairy farms in Denmark where cows never left their yards at all. The peasants listened attentively to him, smoking and repeating the same questions again and again. My father was very patient with them. He knew that they all were slow, and that it took some time for them to digest new ideas.

The beneficial results of Stolypin's reform could be seen in all the villages which got rid of their communes and partitioned their land, each peasant becoming an individual farmer. These new farmers usually built new homes for themselves, apart from their villages, with fences around their small yards and vegetable gardens. Their fields were well fertilized, well ploughed and void of any stones and weeds. It was a joy to see these new farms! And, within a couple of years, they all became well-to-do, substantial farmers!

During the following years, peasants did not bother my father with the same questions about pastures. They had already learned the answer and their minds were made up. They came to ask him to write petitions for them to the Department of Agriculture to send land surveyors to partition their land. Now they all were anxious to get rid of their archaic communes!

Stolypin's reform was progressing, bringing satisfactory results. In the period of only eight years preceding World War I, approximately twenty percent of all peasants became individual landowners and full and equal subjects of the Empire. The idea of private property was strongly established in their mind. As a matter of fact, when in 1929, Stalin started general «collectivization» throughout the Soviet Union, **these individual farmers resisted most stubbornly reform of the Soviet Government**, of re-introducing the old communes in the form of collective farms (Kolkhoz). They

were called «kulaks», were declared «enemies of the Soviet Union», and were ruthlessly exterminated by the Soviet government.

If only the First World War had been avoided in 1914, or post-poned for some ten or fifteen years, a Communist form of government would never have been established in Russia! All Communists, or advocates of the Communist doctrine, would have been chased out of every Russian village, or would have been «lifted on pitch forks» in the true Russian fashion.

One day that summer, when we were all sitting in the diningroom having lunch, our maid, Katia, announced that Itzeck had come to say goodbye to us. We all left the table and went to the entrance hall where Itzeck was waiting.

Itzeck was a Jewish tailor. Contrary to the police regulations of that period, which forbade the Jews to reside in villages, Itzeck and his family were living in the village of «Lakushi», where there was a Russian Orthodox Church and a Russian priest — the priest Odintzov — lived.

Itzeck (pronounced It-zeck) was the most inoffensive creature in the world. We usually ordered him to make linen suits out of material produced by peasants in Belorussia. This material was sold at eleven kopecks (five and a half cents) a yard, but it was just as good as the Irish linen. We wore these suits in the summer, especially for hunting. The linen was of excellent quality, washable and durable. We wanted Itzeck to make our suits well-tailored. Therefore, we usually gave him a suit made by a good tailor in St. Petersburg and asked him to copy it. Itzeck would take apart the suit which was given to him as a model, cut out a new suit exactly like the old one, and then finish both. For his work he charged two Roubles (one dollar).

Evidently Itzeck enjoyed his work. When he wanted to enter the room, he did not knock. Instead, he first opened the door very carefully. In the half-opened door, his head would appear, turning to all sides and looking around. When he saw us, he would smile, open the door widely and step into the room. After the usual greetings, he would produce a suit, ready to be tried on. He would walk around the person who was trying on the new suit, as a great artist

observing his masterpiece. He would stand at one side, spreading his arms and tilting his head; then, in a few steps, he would take a similar pose on the other side of the person, and then, all of a sudden, he would jump like a tiger right on the person's chest, where he had noticed a thread which he intended to bite off as tailors usually did at that time.

We all knew Itzeck well and liked him very much. The announcement that he came to tell us goodbye puzzled us a little.

« Where are you going, Itzeck? Why... », everyone was asking.

In the meantime, Itzeck attempted to kiss my father's hand, but my father never permitted him to do it. Itzeck stood silently for a few seconds, and then solemnly announced:

« I am going to America! »

This announcement produced a considerable effect on all of us.. we were surprised, and wondered why Itzeck was travelling so far. Then, again, there were questions.

« But why, Itzeck? Are you unhappy here? And how about your family? Are they going with you? »

Itzeck could not answer all the questions at once. He waited a little, and then said quietly:

« I did not tell you how horrible it was all these years for me to live in the village among the mujiks (peasants!) It was terrible. Every Saturday and Sunday, all glasses in my windows in my little house were broken. We all sat inside, afraid to move trying to keep quiet.. my wife, my children, trembling... And outside a mob of drunken mujiks, young and old, and their loud voices, « Dirty, damned Jew! We are going to show you », and they banged on the door. We wondered if the door and locks were strong enough. Every Saturday night, every holiday, as soon as they would get drunk. It was a torture! ».

We all listened to Itzeck in complete silence. We all knew he was telling the truth. Russian peasants were ignorant and cruel even towards their own wives and children. And they all hated the Jews with the blind hatred of ignorant people. We felt sincerely sorry for Itzeck.

« But why did you stay in Lakushi? Why didn't you move somewhere else? » someone asked.

« I am poor », Itzeck said, « and it costs money to move. And, now it has been decided, we all are going to America, and I came to bid goodbye to all of you ». There were tears in Itzeck's eyes as he approached my father again. My father kissed Itzeck on his forehead and put some money in his hand.

« Here, it is for you. Take it! You will need it. », and he patted him on the shoulder.

In a few minutes poor Itzeck was gone.

« Poor fellow », my father said. He certainly had a very difficult time. I only hope that he will have better luck where he is going ».

In the fall we returned as usual to Yalta, and in February of the following year, my father received a telegram that Nussia had died. She was buried in the family cemetery at Kolpino.



## CONCLUSION

### CHAPTER XXVII

In the early autumn of 1911, the unveiling of the monument of the Czar-Emancipator took place in Kiev, and the Czar with his family, the Imperial Court, members of the Russian government and the diplomatic corps went to this ancient capital of Prince St. Vladimir, who introduced Christianity to Russia in the year 989.

On the 2-15 of September, the headlines of all newspapers in Russia carried the tragic news that in Kiev, during the performance of a play in a theater, in the presence of the Czar, an attempt on the life of Prime Minister Stolypin took place!

The attendance on that day was only by personal invitation. Stolypin was sitting in the first row of the orchestra, not far from the Imperial box. During the second intermission, the majority of the people went to the foyer. Stolypin stood facing a half-empty theater and leaning on the balustrade which separated the orchestra from the first row of chairs. He was talking to Count Freedericks, Minister of the Imperial Court.

All of a sudden, a man dressed in a tailcoat walked rapidly towards him through the middle aisle and fired point-blank two shots. For a few seconds, Stolypin continued to stand. Then, turning slowly towards the Imperial box, he made a sign of the Cross, blessing the Czar, and fell on one of the chairs. A big scarlet spot appeared on his white uniform.

The would-be assassin tried to escape, but was stopped by the people who rushed from the lobby at the sounds of the shots. He would have been torn to pieces but the police saved him from the crowd. He happened to be a man by the name of Mordka Bogrov, an agent of the Security Police, and a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party at the same time.

The revolutionary leaders realized that Stolypin's reform was dealing a mortal blow to the very idea of revolution — and decided to kill Stolypin. But how a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party happened to become an agent of the Security Police, entrusted to guard members of the government in the presence of the Czar, was a mystery! Obviously, something was amiss somewhere. As a strong leader, Stolypin had many enemies among the high government officials.

Stolypin, lying in a chair, was carried out of the theater. It was difficult to describe the excitement of the crowd. At that moment, the strains of « God Save the Czar » came from the orchestra and the crowd sang the National Russian anthem. The great majority had tears in their eyes. The Czar stayed in the Imperial box while the anthem was played, and then left the theater.

Stolypin was taken to a hospital. There were two wounds; one bullet had gone through the liver, and the other had hit his right arm. The best medical doctors and physicians from all over Russia rushed to Kiev and volunteered their services. According to the doctors' opinion, Stolypin was not in immediate danger, and they expected to save his life. The Czar received a most reassuring report from Dr. Botkin, the Czar's personal physician, and did not cancel all the festivities connected with the unveiling of the monument, but on the fifth day Stolypin's condition took a turn for the worse, and late in the evening on the 19th September, he passed away. All Russia mourned the great statesman.

The newspapers reprinted the excerpts of his speeches in the Parliament (Russian Duma) when he was facing a strong, hostile opposition. He spoke always very clearly, very much to the point. He repeated many times that he counted on the strong, hard-working peasants, not on the

drunkards and the lazy ones. He was trying to free Russian people from the poverty and misery of archaic communes. During one speech, turning to the members of the revolutionary parties, the left wing of the Duma, he shouted:

« YOU ARE SEEKING GREAT UPHEAVALS, BUT WE NEED A GREAT, STRONG RUSSIA!!! » and in these few words, he characterized the whole attitude, the desires and the aims of the Russian revolutionaries on the one hand, and the constructive work of the government under his leadership on the other. Emperor Wilhelm of Germany was a great admirer of Stolypin, and considered him the greatest statesman of his time.

The agrarian reform of Stolypin continued to bring its beneficial results. Every year, many, thousands of Russian peasants became small proprietors, and Russia was enjoying an unprecedented prosperity. But at the critical moment caused by the assassination of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand in 1914, the strong hand of a great Russian statesman was lacking, and Russia became involved in a fatal war.

In Kolpino we all mourned Stolypin. In contrast to his usual jovial disposition my father was in a depressed mood, and, for several weeks, there was a feeling that we had lost a close relative who was very dear to all of us.

\* \* \*

It was a cloudy day early in October of 1911. A fine, drizzly rain was beating against the window panes. This dreary weather usually continued for weeks during the fall in the northwestern part of Russia until the first sharp frost came, covering the meadows with a hazy white blanket.

I was sitting in the gallery in Kolpino house, looking at the oil painting of Prince Michael Kasimir Oginski, Hetman (Grand Chancellor) of Lithuania. He was a direct descendant of St. Michael, Prince of Chernigov, whose great-grandson, Gregory, was called « Ogon » (means fire in Russian). The Oginskis were the feudal lords of Kozielsk. In the latter part of the XV century, the Oginski family moved to Lithuania, and thereby escaped persecution of the Czar Ivan the Terrible. At that time the feudal lords had the right to choose their sovereign. And now the proud countenance of the Lithuanian

Hetman, dressed in a Polish national costume, looked at me from his place on the wall.

Next to him was an oil portrait of Prince Michael-Kleofas Oginski (1765-1833), famous composer of Oginski polonaises. Most of his life he lived in Florence.

Further on was a portrait of Joseph Deszpot-Zienowicz, husband of Princess Polonia Oginski, owner of Kolpino.

At that time, many Russian and Polish nobles used to go to Paris. It was right after the occupation of the French capital by the Russian troops in 1813-1814. The Russian nobles studied the advanced doctrines of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the history of the French revolution. Being influenced by these ideas of freedom, the Russian aristocrats organized a « Revolt of Decembrists » in 1825.

Joseph Deszpot-Zienowicz also used to visit Paris and the French Riviera, travelling in a dormeuse. This was a huge travelling carriage on eight wheels that required at least eight horses to pull it. Inside, the seats could be converted into sleeping berths. At this time, as it was before the invention of the locomotive, a trip to Paris would take about a month.

Once Deszpot-Zienowicz took his valet on his trip. The valet Zakhary was his Belorussian serf, an ugly looking fellow, with long arms hanging limply at his sides. When Zienowicz arrived in Paris and stopped at the hotel, he warned Zakhary not to leave the house under any circumstances, being afraid that he might get lost.

Zakhary did not obey the order of his master, and eventually did get lost. Deszpot-Zienowicz notified the police, and looked every-where, in vain, for his valet. About a month later, Zienowicz happened to ride through a public square in Paris where a street bazaar was going on. One of the advertisements attracted his attention; he bought a ticket and entered a booth.

On a small stage, an alert Parisian was delivering a short lecture to the crowd about some unknown Polynesian tribe. He explained that he had captured one of the savages. Then two men dragged a cage on the stage. To the great

surprise of Deszpot-Zienonwicz, he discovered his Zakhary sitting inside the cage! Large pieces of raw meat were brought on a plate, and the Frenchman explained that the Polynesian tribesmen he was talking about ate only raw meat, and even human flesh. He put a piece of meat on a long iron stick and pushed it into the cage. Zakhary grabbed the meat and ate it greedily, being evidently frightfully hungry.

Deszpot-Zienowicz approached the cage and poor Zakhary fell down on his knees. « My Lord, save me! » he cried in his Belorussian dialect. Deszpot-Zienowicz ordered him out of the cage, and took him away, though the Frenchman made good offers to him for his serf.

Also hanging on the wall of the Kolpino gallery was a portrait of Joseph Juriewicz, a direct descendant of a Lithuanian princely family. Their appanage was the Orsha district in the province of Mogilev. Centuries ago, the Juriewicz family had moved to Poland, members of this family intermarried with Polish aristocracy, and Joseph Juriewicz had a characteristically Polish countenance. He was very handsome with his long Polish moustache. He came into possession of Kolpino after his marriage to Anna Deszpot-Zienowicz, my great-grandmother. His principal estates were Kraszuty, Franopol, and Porzecze, and in Kolpino he was only a visitor. On his occasional trips to Kolpino, he usually was greeted by a crowd of his serfs, who would all come to pay their respect to their lord. Juriewicz would address them with a short speech, and then give them vodka, the famous Russian and Polish national drink, without which no celebration was complete. Usually several barrels of vodka were prepared on the day of the arrival of Joseph Juriewicz to his wife's estate. Being very generous, he usually instructed the superintendent of the estate to grant all the petitions of his serfs, which were presented on this occasion.

The curly head of the decidedly Germanic countenance of my grandfather Wrangell, dressed in a high white lace jabot, gazed sternly at me from his bronze frame. My father told me that he had a real hypnotic power over people. His portrait was painted by Khrucki, a well-known Polish painter.

I looked at those portraits of my ancestors in the gallery of Kolpino house. They had all been persons of culture,

who were accustomed to live in luxury and comfort. And I remembered the ignorant faces of the peasants who lived in their villages only a few miles away. I wondered why there was such a difference between these two types of human beings. I was deep in my thoughts when my father entered the room. He was dressed in a hunting outfit. In spite of his age, he held himself erect, and was in his habitual good humor.

«What are you doing here, Carl?» he asked me. «The weather is dreadful», he continued. «It is too wet to go shooting. How do you like the country when it rains this way?».

«I do not mind it, Father. In fact I like this rain. It has a certain charm.. I was looking at those portraits», and I pointed to the wall.

«What is wrong with the portraits?» my father inquired. «Why are you in such a pensive mood? Do you feel all right?».

«I am fine. I just want to know why the peasants are so ignorant!».

«Oh, well», and my father turned his head away. «Don't occupy your mind with such ideas. You are too young to understand it». He looked at me, and, seeing my disappointment, added more seriously.

«First of all, Carl, our ancestors were of a different race. Beginning with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, they are trying now to prove that inheritance means very little, practically nothing. Well, I do not agree with that. Then why do we breed thorough-bred racing horses and pedigreed dogs?» He stopped for a moment, and then continued.

«In Russia, Europe and Asia meet. And Russian peasants have a large amount of Mongolian blood, although void of good traits of Asiatics. They inherited the worst features of the Europeans and the cunning cruelty of the Asiatics. Russian intelligentsia is trying to promote a myth that Russian people are religious and good-hearted. In reality, they are superstitious and extremely cruel! Russian priests are poor and are just about as ignorant as the peasants themselves.

Look at our priest Odintzov. He is a mujik in a long black frock! Look how cruel they are to the poor Itzeck! They killed Andrushka, a boy servant of my mother because my mother liked the boy and they were envious. They are cruel to all defenseless animals. They beat their horses, their dogs, all domestic animals. A peasant beats his children and his wife, too. And if he doesn't, it means that he does not love her! » My father stopped for a moment again.

« Last year the Czar signed the law of universal education », he continued. « According to the plan, in 1922, education of practically all children in Russia is supposed to be accomplished. The government provides a school building and the cost of the teacher's salaries for any community or communities with forty-five children. But the climate is very severe. You cannot send children to school in the winter when it is so cold that one hesitates to put a dog out of doors! In the summer the children are working the fields, helping their parents. It will take time before all the people will learn to read and write. But even now, more than fifty percent of all recruits are literate ». My father got a cigarette out of his cigarette case and lighted it. I knew that once he started, he would continue.

« We, the landowners, can influence the peasants in the best way. We have to keep up with the times, introducing new methods of farming and new machinery. Our estates should represent schools were the peasants would be able to learn correct agricultural methods. We do not need to go to them. Primitive people are like monkeys. They are eager to copy their masters, if you leave them alone. If you try to force them, they become stubborn, like all ignorant people who immediately become suspicious that we have some ulterior motive. It is not difficult to go down to their level, like Count Leo Tolstoy did. But we do not need to go down to their level. We have to raise them to our level! It is our problem! Can you imagine me dressed in a peasant's attire, barefoot, ploughing a field, like that crazy old fool? It was a publicity stunt and the height of hypocrisy on his part ».

« No », I laughed. The thought of my father dressed in Tolstoy's fashion was ridiculous! My father smiled, and said,

«Yes, I am telling you the truth! Tolstoy would go to plough a field, dressed as a peasant, just for one purpose — to have his picture taken. Then he would come home, and a butler in white gloves would serve lunch to him. But you, Carl, remember: always be natural in all your relations with peasants. Do not hesitate to accept all sorts of signs of respect on their part. You know, they still continue to kiss our hand. It was a custom of the time of serfdom, and I do not like any sign of humiliation and submission on their part. But you are a lord, and be one! Primitive people are like children. They have a natural distrust for any kind of pose. And do your duty — work in Kolpino and forget about the peasants. The better you work, the more they will have to learn from you ».

My father had a very low opinion of the Russian people. He found them lazy, ignorant and cruel. The subsequent Russian revolution proved that his opinion was justified. At the time of the «Red Terror» when millions of innocent people were «liquidated», the Soviet leaders found among Russian people ready and willing executioners.

Contrary to the Russian intelligentsia, with Count Leo Tolstoy as one of them, my father had no illusions — he realized that no law which would give Russian peasant a complete equality, could make them cultural and intelligent. In his opinion it would take generations, may-be centuries, before masses of the Russian people would attain a higher degree of culture. My father never tried to lower himself to their level, but he realized that the Russian peasants were human beings and treated them accordingly. Being constantly conscious of his own superiority, he was tolerant to their short-comings as any cultured European would be tolerant to a savage.

At that moment, my niece Natalie appeared in the room. Her pretty head was covered with heavy reddish-brown hair. Her big green eyes were shining with mischief. She ran to my father. and standing on the tips of her toes, kissed him on his cheek.

«Please, Grandpa, play your mazurka that I like so well!» At fifteen she was very attractive, and I was secretly in love with her. I did not dare to show my feelings to her,



and suffered as every other boy of fifteen suffers when he falls in love for the first time.

My father went to the piano in the ballroom and played an old mazurka by Szopowicz. The strains of the stately Polish dance filled the room. My father had a good touch and played with great feeling.

The same evening, as usual, we had many guests. Our neighbors, Korsak, Emmanuel Mohl, Count Plater, and my father, played cards. My mother and Emilia were playing a double solitaire. Madame Korsak and Alexandra Bogomolec were watching them. Our dogs were lazily lying in front of the fireplace. In the ball-room Leonid Skorulski was playing dance music, and I was dancing with Natalie. Continuing to dance, we slipped away into the gallery. It was half-dark there, and I kissed Natalie on her lips. The eyes of our ancestors, from their portraits in heavy frames, seemed to watch us and to follow us about the room...

\* \* \*

In 1912, we stayed in Kolpino until late in the fall. It was a beautiful autumn. I was sixteen years old and spent most of my time shooting grouse, partridge and snipe.

Late in October my mother and I returned to Yalta. My father remained in Kolpino because he wanted to supervise personally the felling of trees in our forests which were sold for sleepers railroad ties to some German railroad. Staying in the forest for hours at a time, my father contracted pneumonia. At first he decided that he had only a severe cold, but as his condition did not improve, a doctor was fetched by carriage from Nevel, a town that was some twenty miles from Kolpino. The doctor diagnosed pneumonia and insisted that a wire would be sent immediately to my mother urging her to come at once.

My mother and I went immediately from Yalta to Sebastopol by car, and took an express train north to Kursk, Orel, Smolensk, Vitebsk — a distance of more than a thousand miles. We arrived when my father was already in a coma.

It was dreadful to see my father, always so handsome, usually smiling pleasantly, in his last moments. His face had become drawn and thin. His eyes, usually so kind and intel-

lilent, and sparkling with good humor, stared now with a vacant, still expression. He was delirious.

The moment my mother entered my father's bedroom, she knelt by his bed and remained there until he died, holding his hand and muttering prayers...

I was told to approach his bed. For a moment he recognized me and wanted to give me his blessing. He raised his thin hand but it fell limply on the cover of his bed. Half an hour later he passed away. For the first time I fully realized that there was something in our life that we could not avoid nor escape. My father died on the 13-26 of January, 1913, at eight o'clock in the evening, and was buried in a specially built vault in our family cemetery in Kolpino.

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